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THE MULTICULTURAL CENTER'S ROLE IN BLACK MALE SUCCESS AT A PREDOMINANTLY WHITE INSTITUTION

by

STEPHAN T. MOORE
(Under the Direction of Carl Sorgen)

ABSTRACT

Many scholarly works have focused on the problems that Black males face in higher education at predominantly White institutions (PWI). However, few have explored specific factors that lead to the success of Black males. This study focuses on the Multicultural Center's role in Black male success at PWI. There are a myriad of issues that Black men face when pursuing higher education ranging from a lack of financial resources to "invisibility" in the collegial environment. These challenges are further exacerbated for Black men who are enrolled at a PWI. The Multicultural Center (MC) is among the essential modalities that can be used by Black men in college to cope with and overcome the often stubborn and burdensome challenges that accompany their post-secondary education experience.

The purpose of the study was to examine how participating in academic and social programs offered by the MC at a PWI aid in the success of Black male students. The research questions were predicated on the ways that Black men navigate the academic and social collegiate challenges at a PWI and how the MC helps in this regard. The theoretical frameworks for the study included PVEST, Social Cognitive Theory, and Tinto's Model of Integration. In keeping with the qualitative approach and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis methodology, a sample of 7 Black male participants was chosen by purposive sampling. Interviews and a focus group discussion were then conducted after receipt of their informed consent. Data were transcribed and coded.

The main conclusion of the study was that the MC assisted the Black male students at the PWI in a social sense. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Black male students re-examine their mind-set about realities at the PWI and their (non) interaction with White peers and White faculty for optimizing academic advancement. Furthermore, senior-level administrators of the PWI should take the particular challenges of Black males into consideration, and review the operation and funding of the MC, so as to make effectual changes for benefiting Black male students.

INDEX WORDS: Black male college students, Predominantly white institutions (PWIs), Multicultural center (MC)

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PREDOMINANTLY WHITE INSTITUTION

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THE MULTICULTURAL CENTER'S ROLE IN BLACK MALE SUCCESS AT A
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DEDICATION

First and foremost, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my mother and grandmother for nurturing me into the man I am today. The love, support, wisdom, encouragement and so much more that they provided to me as a young boy allowed me to understand early on the meaning of working toward a fruitful life. They have both always been my rock, role models, and my world. I dedicate this to my mother and grandmother from my heart to yours with love for days and days to come.

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I owe a special thank you to the EDLD faculty of Georgia Southern University, for allowing me to showcase my passion and understanding of educational leadership in higher education. My time in the program expanded the lens in which I wear as a Black male working in higher education. A sincere thank you to my advisor, Dr. Carl Sorgen for your guidance and countless hours spent working with and challenging me not to settle but to excel. The information and wisdom you have shared will forever be appreciated. To my committee, Dr. Sorgen, Dr. Williams-Johnson, and Dr. Durodoye-- thank you each for hanging in there with me. I have enjoyed working with and learning from each of you. All of you brought a unique and powerful perspective to my dissertation research by offering your unwavering support, constructive criticism, and compassion. All of which contributed to making this a substantial research study.

I will never have enough words, hugs, or gifts to express my gratitude to the participants of the institution where my study was conducted. Each played a meaningful role in the outcome of my research study. I remain humble and give praise for this accomplishment to those who continue not to be heard or seen.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Background

Multicultural centers (MCs) allow for extensive exposure to diversity and experiences on university campuses. They also serve as a centralized area for services, resources, and opportunities for helping Black men to successfully transition into the collegiate environment (Sanders, 2016). Staff working in MCs often work with select populations to provide academic assistance (Sanders, 2016) and facilitate collaboration between various departments at universities to ensure that there are measurable improvements in the areas of recruitment, matriculation, retention, and progression of Black men and other marginalized students attending predominantly White institutions (PWIs) (Hefner, 2002; Princes, 2005; Sanders, 2016). Studies confirm that when institutions foster positive, quality relationships between Black students, faculty, and the larger student body, they assist in combating unsustainable campus situations, facilitate community and, encourage persistence (Brooms & Davis, 2017; Harper, 2015; Sanders, 2016). These improvements can be most effectively accomplished when institutions intentionally designate space on campus for Black students and supply them with the necessary resources.

This finding is not surprising considering the mission of many MCs (also known as the office of Multicultural Affairs or Office of Diversity) is to create comforting spaces for students while engaging the campus in dialogue across the realms of social, economic, and cultural differences through academic and social programming and initiatives (Hefner, 2002). MCs serve to simulate a home away from home; they are also pivotal in serving as a foundation to help Black men grow and develop both academically and socially (Durodoye, Ennis-Cole, Simpson & Ennis Jr, 2008; Yankelovich, 1998). It is in this regard that Stovall (2005) argued that Black cultural centers should be connected to Black Studies programs,

noting that the cultural center should be the practical and social arm, while the Black Studies program should be the intellectual arm. As the social arm, MCs can help promote self-efficacy and personal development that will enable Black males to better navigate their collegiate experience (Brooms & Davis, 2017).

Pittman (1994) highlighted the benefits of having MCs on college campuses which include: offering opportunities for scholarship, research, and faculty enrichment in areas of race, culture, and ethnicity across all disciplines. Also, cultural centers represent an effective way to improve campus race relations by generating a wealth of lectures, dialogues, and exhibits that are useful in educating the campus community. MCs play a pivotal role in the lives of Black men on predominantly White campuses. For example, studies conducted by Yankelovick (1998) indicated that MCs improve student success and campus climate. They also provide students with opportunities to learn from people of varied backgrounds, encourage critical thinking, challenge stereotypes, enhance communication and prepare students for citizenship in an increasingly complex and diverse society (Hefner, 2002; Pittman, 1994).

Research has also suggested that students' experiences in and out of the classroom are central to their academic success and involvement in campus-related activities (Tinto, 1993). Similar to the practical experiences, involvement at the college level is perceived as one of the most important factors contributing to the success of Black male students (Harper, 2012). Tinto (1993) suggested that the more a student feels socially and academically integrated into the institution, the greater the likelihood of persistence through to graduation. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) followed the same logic by pinpointing that the quality and quantity of student contact with other people at the institution play a crucial role in college persistence.

However, despite the fact that involvement in campus-related activities is believed to show both social and academic benefits for students, some scholars appear to lament the lack

of Black men's participation in those activities (Harper, 2012). Harper (2012), for instance, pointed out that Black men on predominantly White campuses do not seem to be willing to get involved with activities centered outside of the classroom. This hesitation to become involved with campus activities can and is often detrimental to Black men because their chances of success can be positively influenced by peer-to-peer relationships, which are developed both in and out of the classroom (Britt, 2014; Brooms & Davis, 2017).

Additionally, Black men often find difficulty in fully integrating themselves into White spaces on predominantly White campuses (Britt, 2014; Brooms & Davis, 2017). MCs present the opportunity to structure and promote peer-to-peer relationships between Black males that can help students become more acclimated to their institution, improve and maintain exceptional grades, and develop a sense of persistence and resiliency while obtaining their degrees (Brooms & Davis, 2017). MCs function as designated spaces that create, implement and maintain efforts to foster engagement, self-efficacy, progressive initiatives, and acclimation for Black male students at PWIs.

MCs serve multiple roles on campus and are often tasked with being the voice of the minority student body. As such, it is essential to have an understanding as to the vital role these centers play in shaping the lives of the students they serve. However, the level of influence these centers have in helping with the retention and academic success of Black males is not well documented in the literature, and, further research is warranted.

Statement of the Problem

Various scholarly works focused on the problems that Black students, specifically Black men, experience in higher education (Cuyjet, 2009; Garibaldi, 2009; Gavins, 2009; Jipguep, Harrison & Bonner, 2009; Verdugo & Henderson, 2009). There are a myriad of issues that Black men face when pursuing higher education: lack of financial resources, guidance and information about post-secondary education, social support, role models, balancing college

with work and family, alienation in the college environment, “invisibility” in the collegial environment, stereotyping, focus and self-motivation, assistance and engagement, and low expectations from instructors (Britt, 2014; Naylor, Wyatt-Nichol & Brown, 2015; Robinson, Watson & Adams, 2015; Walters, 2017). Unfortunately, the majority of academic and social challenges experienced by Black men in the post-secondary educational environment occur before their arrival at a university/college campus.

Many Black male students originate from a predominantly low socio-economic background, which is exacerbated by the fact that in many instances, they are first-generation college students (Alexander, 2011). This reality is accompanied by grave consequences, such as lack of guidance regarding choice of college, sparse resources to shoulder underlying expenses associated with specific majors, unfamiliarity with the alignment of a career path with college majors, and the inability to effectively navigate the college system in the early semesters. Invariably, it becomes virtually impossible for Black men to transcend these challenges without large degrees of social and institutional support (Britt, 2014; College Board, 2010; Fries-Britt & Griffin, 2007; Naylor et al., 2015; Robinson et al., 2015; Smallwood, 2015; Walters, 2017). Institutions of higher learning, particularly predominantly White institutions (commonly referred to as PWIs), may not offer programs that address the social and academic challenges of Black men which have resulted in poor college performance, lengthening of the time span toward graduation, and an increased rate of dropout among Black men (Amechi, Berhanu, Cox, McGuire, Morgan, Williams & Williams, 2015; Alexander, 2011; Robinson et al., 2015; Smallwood, 2015; Walters, 2017).

Furthermore, Black men at PWIs can often feel alienated because they may be the only representative from their racial group in classes and in rare cases the entire institution (Britt, 2014; Robinson et al., 2015; Smallwood, 2015; Walters, 2017). Smallwood (2015) ascertained that there are many findings that reinforced the views that Black male students

often find PWIs to be hostile, unfriendly, unwelcoming and non-supportive. Other studies have highlighted that Black male students struggle with invisibility at PWIs (Britt, 2014; Parker, Puig, Johnson & Anthony, 2016). This invisibility is attributed to the outnumbering and outperformance of Black men by Black women and the inability of the majority to recognize others around them who exhibit culturally different behavior (Cuyjet, 2009). In lamentable instances, these social challenges exacerbate or even result in academic problems. Some Black men enter the post-secondary education system with deficiencies due to a breakdown in the 'academic pipeline,' such as coming from a low-income community with schools that were generally under-resourced (Gavins, 2009). The entry of Black men into post-secondary education, in many instances, was preceded by underachievement at the secondary level, in which there was minimal or no collegiate preparatory coursework (Bryant, 2015). These circumstances, however, resulted in the impairment of the Black male's interaction with the faculty, unwillingness to access academic resources, and reduced desire to seek assistance from peers for completion of assignments (Harper, 2015; Robinson et al., 2015; Walters, 2017). Irrespective of the academic strength of the Black male student, the social challenges of PWIs can corrode their ability to survive and thrive (Harper, 2015; Robinson et al., 2015; Walters, 2017).

Research on Black male students delineates that the social and academic challenges Black males experience are shrouded in a broader and entrenched context of societal practices that privilege the White middle and upper-class male (Harper, 2015; Walter, 2017). This unfortunate reality is exacerbated by severe challenges such as budgetary cuts in programs, psychological phenomena associated with being a member of this particular social group, inequalities in race and class, lack of role models and advocates, communities with chronic unemployment, and high levels of residential segregation (Harper, 2015; Robinson, & Watson & Adams, 2015). Accordingly, the use of multicultural centers is among the

essential modalities that can be used by Black men in college to cope with and overcome the often stubborn and burdensome challenges that accompany their post-secondary education experience.

Deficiencies in Evidence

A considerable amount of research has examined the experiences of Black men in college. These studies focused on the history of Black men in higher education (IHEP, 2010; Masters, 2014), as well as satisfaction, involvement, and engagement of Black men in higher education institutions (Hague-Palmer, 2013). Additional studies have focused on the underperformance of Black men in higher education (Harper, 2012) and various initiatives that have resulted in higher levels of recruitment, persistence, retention and graduation rates (Harper, 2015; Strayhorn, 2008; 2013). There are few studies dedicated to the influence that MCs have on the experience of Black men in college. The available literature regarding MCs focused on the history of MCs (Hefner, 2002; Pittman, 1994; Princes; 1994), or the efficacy of MCs in conjunction with other factors. According to Harper (2012), an expert on diversity in higher education, there has been little academic inquiry into the factors that influence the success of Black men in college. Therefore, in a wide-ranging qualitative research study on Black undergraduate men, Harper (2012) proffered his perspective for facilitating Black male progress in higher education. In this vein, he was of the perspective that the often one-sided view of the educational attainment of Blacks was to be balanced against the fact that many Black students manage to successfully navigate higher education despite grave obstacles (Harper, 2012). Grave obstacles that include, “low teacher expectations, insufficient academic preparation for college-level work, racist and culturally unresponsive campus environments, and the debilitating consequences of severe underrepresentation, to name a few (Harper, 2012, p. 3). Against the context established by Harper (2012) and the lack of scholarly attention regarding MCs, the researcher was propelled to explore the role of

multicultural centers in supporting Black males with academic and social collegiate challenges at a predominantly White institution.

Rationale

Although there is extensive research explaining how the collegiate enrollment of Black men has increased over the years, little has been said about the use of MCs as tools to help recruitment, retention, and graduation efforts of this population. Recent research on the Black male student experience in higher education has focused mostly on retention and persistence (Harper, 2012). Creating a designated space on college campuses where Black men can make meaningful connections with faculty, other students, and staff will not only aid in increasing the chances of graduation but can also make the collegiate experience more enjoyable. The use of MCs to help Black students transition to college and the strategies to minimize the constant social and academic struggle of Black male students at PWIs has not been given much focus in earlier studies. Consequently, this study aimed to explore how post-secondary institutions can utilize multicultural centers to optimize the college experience for Black men at PWIs. With the ultimate goal of, reducing drop-out rates, and shortening the time toward graduation.

The researcher has a personal interest in studying the topic because of his own experiences. Throughout the researcher's academic career at a PWI, there was a lack of resources at the institution to cater to the need for an engaging and fulfilling academic experience for himself and other Black students. At that crucial point in his life, the ultimate goal for the researcher was to be successful, but also to acquire relevant exposure and meaningful experiences that would allow him to make seminal contributions to higher education, specifically as it concerned the success of Black men. He had first-hand experience with being a Black student at a PWI and, by extension, the various challenges that negatively influenced recruitment, retention, and ultimately the graduation of Black males.

Against this context, the purpose of this qualitative study was to examine how academic and social programs hosted and offered by the MC at a predominantly White institution aid in increased recruitment, persistence, retention and graduation of Black male students.

Research Questions

The outcomes of this study were expected to show how academic and social programs, and initiatives hosted by MCs positively influence student satisfaction and engagement, including the ways in which their associated benefits affect the recruitment, retention, progression and graduation rates of Black males at PWIs. It was also the expectation that the findings of the study would provide the administration of various PWIs with information to implement additional programs to increase the likelihood of a successful outcome for Black male students. Therefore, the study was guided by the following research questions:

- **Research Question 1.** How do Black men navigate academic and social collegiate challenges at a predominately White institution (PWI)?
- **Research Question 2.** How does a multicultural center assist Black men at a predominately White institution (PWI) to overcome social and academic challenges?

Theoretical Framework

This study was conducted through the conceptual framework of Tinto's (1975) Integration Model, Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST) (Dupree, Gasman, James, & Beale-Spencer, 2009; Lee, Spencer & Harpalani, 2003) and Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1999). The use of these various theories will provide the framework for an in-depth exploration of the research topic.

Tinto's Model of Integration

Tinto's (1975) model of student persistence and academic integration is regarded as one of the most prominent models of persistence in higher education. The core argument of this model illustrates that academic and social integration are pivotal to students' success.

According to, Tinto (1975), "given individual characteristics, prior experiences, and commitments, it is the individual's integration into the academic and social systems of the college that is most directly related to his continuance in that college" (p. 96). Tinto (1975; 1993) further elaborated that more significant levels of academic and social integration are correlated to higher levels of commitment to a student's educational goals.

Moreover, the institution a student attends is ultimately affiliated with the outcome of positive influence on the student's academic performance and persistence. Following three revisions to his original model, Tinto (1993), outlined three key attributes that increase the predisposition of a student's ability to persist or succeed in college: (a) a student's background, (b) precollege education and (c) personal attributes. Based on his model revision, the indicators of socioeconomic status, educational expectations, and parental level of education are used to determine a student's background. Race and gender are constituents of personal attributes, while precollege education encompasses academic preparedness and, social and educational ability (Tinto, 1993).

In this revised model, Tinto (1993) embedded the viewpoint that the variables of predisposed attributes and academic success can be mediated by the extent of academic and social interaction on campus. He articulated the caveat that while a large number of Black male students lack the predisposing factors, increased levels of academic and social integration can compensate for a deficit of predisposed experiences and ultimately lead to a greater likelihood of academic success. Conversely, Tinto (1993) advanced that four types of experience might force a student to withdraw from college prematurely prior to graduation:

adjustment, difficulty, incongruence, and isolation. *Adjustment* is the transition from home to college. For some students, the experience is too daunting, and the student withdraws from school. *Difficulty* is described as the ability to perform academically and to meet the standards set by the college. If a student believes that the academic rigor of college is too intense, the student then drops out. *Incongruence* refers to the college not meeting the students' needs, values, and interests. A student will withdraw from college if the culture and realities of the institution are at variance with the personality of the student. *Isolation* sets in when students do not create or become a part of any social networks and do not have any meaningful relationships with their peers and faculty. The absence of a social network causes an individual to feel isolated and results in personal withdrawal (Tinto, 1993). Even in the face of large-scale acceptance, the major criticism leveled at Tinto's (1993) model of integration is that it is not generalizable to ethnic minority students, including Black men. In addition, the theory has been criticized for its emphasis on the assimilation and acculturation of students into the dominant college culture, which could prove to be counterproductive in the transition process for Black males.

Nevertheless, Tinto's (1975; 1993) model of integration was of tremendous significance to this study as it accounted for the social and academic experiences of Black men enrolled at PWIs. The theory also accounted for the disparities in academic achievement among Black males at PWIs commonly delineated in the literature.

Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST)

Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST) at its core advances a framework for the understanding of the promotion and sustenance of resiliency. To further elaborate, the theory provides an alternative framework for exploring the risks and challenges which undervalued groups have to confront from the cradle to the grave (Dupree et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2003). PVEST addresses the fundamental reality of human

vulnerability and the unavoidable influence of contextual conditions such as the inequality or privilege promoting nature of the ecology and its woven opportunities for the inadequacies of human growth and development.

Specifically, PVEST centers on the inevitable coping process required by individuals as they mature and progressively expand their navigation of space and place. Regarding Black men, these state of affairs have been described as ‘a triple quandary’ (Dupree et al., 2009). Black young men have to cope with the traditional and normative human developmental tasks (i.e., school-linked cognitive achievement demands) and confront themes concerning the salience to all men (i.e., as the gender-specific role of providing for the family). Black men also have to cope with the frustrating and psychological bonds associated with structured inequality as a function of being Black or having membership in an undervalued American ethnic group (Dupree, et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2003). PVEST was applicable to this study as it contextualized how the various issues that Black men experience in college can coalesce to reduce resiliency, and ultimately, make the college experience overwhelming for them potentially resulting in dropout. The theory is also relevant because it addresses the difference that support can make for Black men in college.

Social Cognitive Theory

Social Cognitive Theory is premised on the idea that an individual’s behavior has a direct influence on the course of events that occur in his or her life (Bandura, 1999). Bandura (1999) explained that human agency, an individual’s power to achieve set goals, operate within a triadic reciprocal causation structure which encompasses three determinants: behavioral, internal personal factors, and environmental factors. These factors are interdependent and influence one another bi-directionally; however, they do not necessarily have equal strength or exert their influence simultaneously. People are viewed as both producers and products of social systems (Bandura, 1999). The relevance of the presence of

MCs on PWIs is an embodiment of the above-mentioned point, as the MC is an ambiance in the broader environment of the PWI that Black male students can then use to transcend the negativity.

Social structures, such as policies, practices, and procedures impose restrictions and provide resources for personal growth and routine functioning (Bandura, 1999). Social Cognitive Theory asserts that the interplay of internal personal factors and environmental factors produces actions. The overarching argument of the Social Cognitive Theory is that individuals are not merely a conduit of environmental influences; instead, they are partial contributors to whom they become in life (Bandura, 1999). Social Cognitive Theory was applicable to this research given that it addresses how the environment influences and constrains human behavior. The theory spoke to the manner in which the often socially unwelcoming climate of PWIs impairs the resilience of Black men resulting in underperformance and dropout. Conversely, Social Cognitive Theory also accounted for how MCs enable Black men to cope and successfully navigate from matriculation to graduation.

Significance of the Study

As a Black male university administrator who attended a PWI, the researcher often reflected on the resources that should have been available to support, encourage, engage, and create an inclusive environment not only for him but also for other Black students. This study is also intended to promote achievement among Black male students who have an unfortunate history of low achievement at the college level. Furthermore, this study may inform stakeholders in higher education. These include policymakers, university presidents, university administrators, faculty, admissions officers, and education advocacy groups. The study may assist policymakers as it provides them with insight into the various challenges that Black male students experience and the influence MCs have on student success. Therefore, the policy makers, through this increased awareness, will be able to advance

policies that promote and entrench the use of MCs to help Black male students overcome their challenges. University administrators and university presidents may find this study useful as it will enable them to take strategic action regarding the presence and use of MCs to provide meaningful assistance to Black male students. Faculty members will benefit from this study as it enables them to incorporate the use of MCs as a means of strategically augmenting their teaching methods to allow for the challenges faced by Black students.

Furthermore, this study may be relevant for admissions officers as it enables them to optimize their recruitment process of Black students by consummately showcasing supportive mechanisms, such as MCs, which are available to prospective students, in addition to the specific ways in which MCs can assist them to transcend their challenges in order to have a successful college outcome. The outcome from the study may also inform education advocacy groups in a number of ways. Firstly, it provides concrete information regarding the various social and academic challenges that Black students face in the college setting. More specifically, it gives the education advocacy groups insight into how some of the inherent socio-economic challenges of Black males intersect with and is exacerbated by the various challenges that inevitably accompany the college environment. Challenges such as being on their own for the first time, being away from home, rigorous academic environment and managing finances among others. Accordingly, the education advocacy groups will be more empowered to lobby for greater prevalence and prominence of MCs to aid Black students to transcend challenges that threaten to derail their college career.

Most importantly, the researcher intends for the study to be a guide for Black male students, who have a persistent record of underachievement in higher education. Furthermore, it is the hope of the researcher that the results of this study inspire sustained academic inquiry into this overlooked but crucial element of higher education in the United States.

Methodology

The study used a qualitative approach to investigate how programs and initiatives offered by the MC at a four year PWI help Black male students to overcome social and academic challenges while attending college. More specifically, the researcher was interested in how MCs at PWIs influence recruitment, persistence, retention, academic success and ultimately graduation of Black men. To explore these experiences, the researcher collected data using interviews and a focus group with current students. According to the Qualitative Research Consultants Association (2015), qualitative research provides for the dynamic nature of the interview or discussion process and allows the researcher the opportunity to analyze the response of the interviewees carefully; in a manner that seeks to understand reasoning behind feelings; thus, enabling the researcher to reach beyond responses in order to get a better understanding of the circumstance by gaining information about the broader context.

A qualitative approach was utilized to enable the researcher to understand the topic under study by having discussions with the participants in their natural contexts (Qualitative Research Consultants Association, 2015). Consequently, the researcher aimed to acquire in-depth knowledge about the ways the MC at a PWI help Black men overcome various social and academic challenges to achieve successful outcomes. The researcher sought to understand the experience and interaction of Black men involved with the MC at a PWI to ascertain how the MC influences Black men's academic and social survival and success from matriculation through to graduation. A vital feature of the qualitative approach is that it focuses on the dynamics between the researcher and the participant in addition to circumstantial constraints (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The qualitative approach, therefore, empowered the researcher to discover answers to questions that delineate the creation of social experience and how affiliated meaning is ascribed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The phenomenological approach was the method that was used in this qualitative study. It was primarily used to shed light on specific ideas, and to identify phenomena mostly through the eyes of the individuals involved in a particular event or situation (Creswell, 2014; 2014; Privitera, 2013). In using the phenomenological approach, the researcher aimed for precise and accurate descriptions while remaining true to the facts presented by participants (Creswell, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The advantage of using the phenomenological method was its usefulness at bringing the experiences and perceptions of individuals to the fore resulting in a challenge to structural or normative assumptions (Creswell, 2014; Privitera, 2013).

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis is arguably among the most popularly used strain of phenomenology. The central underpinning of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis is that it strives to give insight into how an individual in a specific context makes sense of a given phenomenon (Hanley, Lennie & Williams, 2012; Tuohy, Cooney, Dowling, Murphy & Sixsmith, 2013). Consequently, it is the expectation that the phenomenological premise will enable the researcher to pursue a credible and thorough investigation. In contrast, phenomenologists are of the view that the researcher cannot be detached from his or her presuppositions and should not pretend otherwise (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Hence it has been posited that researchers hold their particular beliefs (Terre Manche, Durheim & Painter, 2008). Accordingly, the researcher explored the phenomena of the ways in which the MC assist Black male students to overcome academic and social challenges at a PWI.

For this study, seven participants were recruited for the interviews, and subsequently, four of these participants were invited to participate in the focus group discussion. To be eligible for participation in the study the participants met the following criteria: self-identify as Black, be a U.S. citizen or U.S. Permanent Resident and be at least 18 years old.

Participants were also seniors, currently matriculating full- time at the PWI. Transferred participants must have matriculated at the current institution for more than one (1) semester and have accessed and used the services of the multicultural center at the PWI. The participants were recruited from the selected PWI through the use of a flyer, social media, and email and campus organizations and, through the use of the snowball sampling technique. That is, identified participants were asked to recommend additional participants who meet the criteria for participation in this study.

The focus group was used as a means for data collection as it can create a sense of belonging among the participants and can increase their sense of cohesiveness and help them to feel safe to share information (Onwuegubuzie, Dickinson, Leech & Doran, 2009). For the focus group discussion, a protocol was used to elicit responses from the participants. The discussion was audio- recorded and subsequently transcribed. The participants received a transcript within a week after the focus group discussion to examine for accuracy of responses or member checking. For data analysis, the researcher employed a priori coding based on the questions included in the protocol. The topics based on the questions included: factors that influenced the decision to enroll at the PWI, major academic and social challenges that they experience as a Black male at a PWI, coping strategies used to deal with social and academic challenges at PWI, particular services of the MC that were accessed, whether the use of services offered by the MC helped them navigate social and academic challenges at PWI, and the role of the MC played in getting student to senior year. Following which, the most recurrent topics were classified as major categories. Similarly, the topics that did not recur significantly were grouped into minor categories.

An interview protocol was created by the researcher to fulfill the objectives of this study. The protocol consisted of open-ended questions so that the responses of the participants could provide more detail and enabled the researcher to acquire in-depth

knowledge about their experiences with the MC on a PWI. The process previously described for the focus group was also followed for the interviews.

Permission to conduct this study was obtained from the Georgia Southern University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Following, IRB approval, data was collected from participants through interviews and a focus group discussion. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. The researcher discussed the purpose of the study with all participants. Participants were asked to answer all questions to the best of their ability and knowledge about how the MC on their campus have aided in their recruitment, persistence, retention, and graduation.

Definition of Key Terms

Black Male- The term refers to individuals of African descent who were born in the United States or any of its territories. The term “Black,” is also a marker used to identify skin color primarily (Ray, 2010).

Predominantly White Institution (PWI)- PWI refers to the term used to describe institutions of higher learning in which Whites account for 50% or greater of the student enrollment (Lomotey, 2010).

Student engagement- Student engagement refers to the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2015)

Retention - Retention is defined as first time, full-time students who return to the same institution from their first to the second year.

Graduation rates- Graduation rates refer to the percentage of students who are enrolled at college or university for the first time and who have completed the required program within four to six years.

Student satisfaction- Student satisfaction refers to the measure of contentment by the student in which the students recognizes that he has met some goals or expectations.

Student involvement- This relates to the measurement of the amount of physical and mental enthusiasm that the student dedicates to his or her educational experience.

Multicultural Center- this is usually a physical space that is dedicated to cultural inclusion and diversity. Moreover, it is intended to provide support to Black students and other minority students to help fit in and overcome the challenges of being a minority on a PWI.

Progression- refers to the act of moving from the freshman year through graduation.

Administration- refers to the senior leaders such as the President, Provost, Dean, and Heads of Departments who set the strategic goals for the institution of higher education.

Chapter Summary

The struggle of Black men in society is evident, and the academic environment is no exception. To a large extent, Black men in college struggle socially and academically. Specifically, Black men struggle with acclimating and successfully integrating into the collegiate environment of PWIs for various reasons. However, one of the leading modalities that they use to transcend the different challenges is MCs. Therefore, MCs play a pivotal role in the social and academic success of Black men enrolled in PWIs. The mission of many MCs is to create comforting spaces for students while seeking ways to address and enhance the social, economic, and cultural differences through academic and social programs and initiatives at universities. These centers not only provide spaces for comfort but can also provide various resources for assisting Black men. Resources which can be, and are often pivotal in, enabling them to transition successfully from matriculation to graduation, while serving as a voice for articulating their issues.

Accordingly, it is crucial that the key stakeholders of higher education, in particular, at PWIs are knowledgeable about the critical role that these centers play in the lives of the students they serve. However, the influence of MCs on the acclimation, matriculation, and graduation of Black men is not well documented. The results of this research can be a valuable source of information for the administration (President, Provost, and Heads of Department) at PWIs and propel increased institutional support and financial resources to MCs on their campuses. Thereby, in the long run, bolstering the capacity of assistance that these centers can offer to Black men. The ultimate outcome of this research was to improve the graduation rates of Black men enrolled in PWIs by making the institution more enabling for people of color especially against the context of their historical disadvantage. MCs do not aim to give an unfair advantage to students of color, but rather to provide resources to Black students so that they can overcome societal and institutional barriers.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Organization of Literature Review

This literature review is organized in such a way as to present a robust historical context regarding Black students in higher education, the establishment of multicultural centers and their pivotal role in helping Black students transcend the challenges faced at PWIs. Therefore, the literature review starts with a historical exploration of Blacks in higher education to showcase a trajectory of the persistent marginalization of Blacks, the lingering institutionalization of racism, and the influence of racism on the current collegiate achievement of Black men. This aspect of the literature delineated a path toward the encapsulation of how the experiences of Black men at predominantly White institutions created the need for multicultural centers. This chapter also presents the information garnered from benchmark studies examined the broad and specific context in which the topic is situated and subsequently, uses the information gleaned as a premise for the study while identifying the gaps.

Additionally, this literature review focuses on the creation of multicultural centers, why they are important to persons of color, especially Black men, how MCs assist students in coping, and how they function as a pivotal coping strategy for Black males at PWIs. The focus is deconstructed into two elements: the first being the origin of multicultural centers, and the second aspect is the importance of multicultural centers to Black male students at PWIs. This section of the literature review incorporates the perspective that multicultural centers provide spaces that engender cultural familiarity, proffer resources that create positive college experiences and ultimately result in increased rates of graduation. These are examined through the enhancement of success factors that encompass: the extent of

acclimation to the collegiate environment, the degree of collegiate engagement, the development of self-efficacy, and the access to academic initiatives. The final segment will address the importance of MCs to Black students at PWIs.

Historical Context

Post-secondary education is pivotal for social mobility and economic advancement in American society (Baum, Ma & Payea, 2010; Harrison & Hatfield Price, 2017; Newman & Newman, 2017; Trostel, 2015; United States Department of Treasury and United States Department of Education, 2012). Students with limited or no access to post-secondary education are depicted as having a bleak future (Brand & Xie, 2010; McMahon, 2010; Newman & Newman, 2017; Trostel, 2015). This reality has been more evident for persons from lower socio-economic backgrounds, ethnic minorities, and immigrants (McMahon, 2010; 2009; Trostel, 2015; Zell, 2009). Arguably, the lack of access or the inability to complete tertiary education kick-starts the vicious cycle of poverty in the very communities that need it the most (McMahon, 2010; Trostel, 2015; Zheng, 2017).

Importance of Post-Secondary Education in American Society

There are many reasons to obtain post-secondary education in American society including better employment opportunities, higher earnings, and upward social mobility (Berg, 2016; McMahon, 2010; Newman & Newman, 2017; Toutkoushian & Paulsen, 2016). Various segments of American society have not had access to tertiary education (Bailey & Dynarski, 2011; Berg, 2016; Carnevale & Stroh, 2013; Hauptman, 2012; St. John, Daun-Barnett & Moronski-Chapman, 2012). Interestingly, these segments are inextricably linked to factors such as socio-economic class, language barriers, ethnicity, and immigrant status (Bailey & Dynarski, 2011; Berg, 2016; Bryd & Edwards, 2009; Carnevale & Stroh, 2013; Hauptman, 2012; Mortenson, 2012). Recently, the progress or lack thereof of Black men in higher education has garnered much attention (Berg, 2016; Bryd & Edwards, 2009). The

statistics paint an unfortunate picture. Only 39% of Black men earn a bachelor's degree within six years at a four-year college compared to 60% of their White peers (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). These statistics are a reflection of the historical disparity between Black men and their White counterparts in regard to graduation after matriculating to higher education (Carnevale & Stroh, 2013; National Center for Education Statistics, 2012).

History of Black Students in Institutions of Higher Learning

The history of Blacks in post-secondary environments can be described as tumultuous at best. The Black experience in American society has been punctuated by subjugation, servitude, exploitation, pain, suffering and, persistent deprivation of fundamental human liberties and rights (Gavins, 2009; Haynes, 2006; Institution for Higher Education Policy, 2010). Blacks were enslaved people in American history and were prohibited from learning how to read or write. Some White slave masters believed that an educated slave would incite rebellion against their servitude and ultimately disrupt the plantation system, while others simply believed that Blacks were incapable of learning altogether (Duster, 2009; IHEP, 2010). Consequently, Blacks were deliberately and consistently deprived of educational opportunities and were often punished if they did otherwise.

Despite the general prohibition of access to education for Blacks, there were notable exceptions (Haynes, 2006; IHEP, 2010). For example, in the face of tremendous risks, Quakers, other religious groups, and abolition activists were committed to educating slaves by offering them tutoring and instruction in secret. Slaves who were educated often worked collaboratively with various groups to teach other slaves (Haynes, 2006; IHEP, 2010). In the 19th century, Dartmouth and Oberlin College facilitated access for Blacks in the face of untold danger (Haynes, 2006; IHEP, 2010). Oberlin was particularly outstanding as it was the first institution of higher learning to admit Black students.

Furthermore, the college is credited with educating more Black students than all American colleges combined in the pre-Civil War period. Notwithstanding, this practice was not without associated risks. The college faculty was brought before the state government for sedition, and there was a deliberation regarding the revocation of the school's charter. These enormous risks, however, did not abate the Oberlin's practice of educating Black students (Morris, 2010). Furthermore, the Institute for Colored Youth, now known as Cheyney University, was founded in 1887 by Richard Humphreys, a Quaker from Philadelphia. Cheyney University is identified and distinguished as America's first Historically Black College and University (HBCU) (Haynes, 2006; IHEP, 2010).

The Role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities

The history of Blacks' access to post-secondary education is the nucleus of the creation, opening, and establishment of HBCUs (Bryd & Edwards, 2009). HBCUs came into existence after the American Civil War in 1865 to be lighthouses for Blacks faced with segregation (Bryd & Edwards, 2009). The landmark Supreme Court ruling in *Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas (1954)* provided Blacks equal educational opportunities as it declared the historic 'separate but equal' doctrine unconstitutional. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s further advanced the support for Blacks to obtain equal educational opportunities (Gavins, 2009). However, the steps toward progress in higher education for Blacks have resulted in persistent and caustic resistance (Gavins, 2009). James Meredith was an example of such opposition. In 1962, Meredith was the first Black student to enter the University of Mississippi, an action which resulted in widespread riots and violence. As a result, President John F. Kennedy had to send 5,000 troops to the University of Mississippi to end the riots (Gavins, 2009; IHEP, 2010). Unfortunately, having laws in place to support education for Blacks did not always produce intended results.

State of Black Men in Higher Education

Presently according to IHEP (2010, para. 6), “[t]he nearly 40 million Blacks residing in the United States—representing approximately 13% of the total population—are three times more likely (24%) to live in poverty than Whites (8%).” With a prospective student’s reality that there is a stubbornly persistent gulf in opportunity for college enrollment and completion for Black students, as only 11% are enrolled in institutions of higher learning (IHEP, 2010). In contemporary American society, Black collegiate students, continue to be persistently challenged by the historical vestiges of discrimination as well as barriers which run the gamut from an inability to meet matriculation requirements to financial affordability (College Board, 2010; Gavins, 2009).

The state of affairs surrounding Black men is among the most stubborn challenges facing higher education in American society (Harper, 2015, 2012) as the recruitment, retention, and graduation rates for Black men have continued to be much lower than their White counterparts (Carnevale & Stroh, 2013; National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Even worse, the disparaging collegiate experience has the possibility to affect Black men’s earning potential and social mobility for their entire life (Naylor et al., 2015; Zheng, 2017).

Furthermore, the circumstances of Black men are compounded when it is contextualized against the reality that American society places emphasis on the link between upward mobility and education by reinforcing the idea that educational level influences income (Berg, 2016). The reality is that Black and White men who enter college at the same time, experience observable divergences that occur as they persist to degree completion (Breen & Inkwan Chung, 2015; Mettler, 2014; Naylor et al., 2015).

Black men are outnumbered at most colleges and universities, and their grade point averages are among the lowest of all undergraduate students. Black men are not being engaged in the classroom, have less enriching experiences beyond the classroom, and

experience relatively higher rates of attrition than their other counterparts (Mettler, 2014; Naylor et al., 2015). In addition to transitional issues faced when coming to college, Black men are subject to encounters with racial stereotyping, racism, and low expectations from faculty and staff, which detract from their sense of belonging (Robinson et al., 2015; Harper & Nichols, 2008; Walters, 2017). These factors affect academic outcomes and willingness to utilize campus resources to ensure collegiate success (Walters, 2017).

The disparity amongst Black and White men in college, including access and enrollment, has garnered the attention of senior-level administrators, civil rights activists, policymakers, and various other stakeholders (Gavins, 2009). While there is a wealth of research on the underperformance of Black men in college, there is a paucity of scholarly research on the factors that contribute to their success (Harper, 2012). To find resolutions to this issue, it is critical to evaluate the systematic strategies implored in post-secondary environments, such as the reliance on multicultural centers and how it influences the academic success and collegiate experience of Black men.

This situation for Black men in higher education is so pervasive and inveterate that it has garnered attention at the school district, county, state and even the national level (Palmer, Moore, Davis & Hilton, 2010). Many believe that the approach to solving this should include multi-stakeholder considerations. The implementation of MCs is one of the most popular and successful remedies (Sanders, 2016); however, despite their popularity and the repeated positive outcomes, there has been very little academic research on the use of MCs in PWIs or the role of MCs in regard to minority students and specifically Black men (Sanders, 2016). Accordingly, there is a limited focus in the academic literature on the influence of MCs on the journey of the Black men from college matriculation to graduation at PWIs (Sanders, 2016).

The underperformance of Black men (Harper, 2012) at various PWIs has been well documented in the literature. Various studies focus on both the pervasive underperformance of Black men in college generally and at PWIs. There has been a noticeable absence in the academic canon of research on the underlying causes for Black recruitment, retention, and persistence in higher education, and the various coping strategies that Black men have employed to survive and even thrive in PWIs.

There is a limited academic inquiry into this topic, as many benchmark studies are over five years old. Therefore, this chapter focuses on the history of Blacks in higher education, challenges faced by Blacks in higher education and the ways MCs have been used to address these challenges.

Black college students and in particular Black male college students are in a precarious place in American higher education (Clu Clewell & Taylor Anderson, 1995; Gavins, 2009; Harper, 2012; IHEP, 2010; Masters, 2014). While the aforementioned is unfortunate, it is even more regrettable that this precarious reality has persisted across successive generations (Haynes, 2006; IHEP, 2010; Masters, 2014). In order to contextualize this reality, it is imperative that the history of Blacks in higher education be explored.

Historical Precedents for Present Realities of Blacks in American Higher Education

In the early records of American history, Blacks were depicted as slaves who were forcibly removed from Africa. Accordingly, in the minds of the enslavers, the Africans were regarded as lacking in intellectual capacity. Also, they were seen as being intellectually inferior to the Whites (Clu Clewell & Taylor Anderson, 1995; IHEP, 2010; Masters, 2014). Therefore, they were taught neither to read nor write and were punished for seeking opportunities to educate themselves. Furthermore, it was thought by some colonial masters that due to their position of servitude, Blacks did not need education. It was also a prevailing view of the colonial masters that a lack of education would greatly facilitate the

submissiveness of slaves, whereas education would incite them to rebellion (IHEP, 2010; Masters, 2014). Essentially, Blacks did not have access to education (Clu Clewell & Taylor Anderson, 1995; Haynes, 2006; IHEP, 2010; Masters, 2014). Despite this, there were some efforts to educate slaves (IHEP, 2010; Masters, 2014). Certain religious groups such as the Quakers, other Abolitionists and educated slaves in the face of significant risks offered tutoring and instruction to slaves (Clu Clewell & Taylor Anderson, 1995; Haynes, 2006; IHEP, 2010; Masters, 2014).

In the early 19th century there was some education of blacks, although it was in small amounts and very rare, not to mention dangerous. Some institutions of higher learning began offering education to Blacks, and in addition, the Quakers founded what is now known as Cheyney University in 1837, which is the oldest historically Black College and University in America. At this juncture, it must be highlighted that realities of blacks in higher education are inextricably linked to the realities that confronted Blacks as slaves in the fledgling American colony (Clu Clewell & Taylor Anderson, 1995; Haynes, 2006; IHEP, 2010; Masters, 2014).

During this time, tensions between the North and South concerning the status of Blacks were mounting as the North was advocating for abolition whereas the South supported slavery. The issue of educating Blacks was among the critical issues that comprised the controversy of slavery (Clu Clewell & Taylor Anderson, 1995; Haynes, 2006; Masters, 2014). Many Northern Whites had some sympathy for Blacks, and some acknowledged that their role in American society was not much different from that of Whites. Against this backdrop, the concept of “separate but equal” was born and upheld with the Supreme Court ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which in essence denotes that although there was not full integration. Blacks should be allowed to live their lives as long as it did not interfere with the existence of Whites (Carnevale & Stroh, 2013).

Education was considered a necessity for blacks as well, therefore leading to the passage of the second Morrill Act in 1890, a land grant for institutions for persons of color, spurring the creation of many Historically Black Colleges (HBCU). Notwithstanding, there was inveterate state-sanctioned racism in the south as following their defeat in the Civil War. Many acts of legislation were passed which decreed segregation in the education of blacks and whites. Segregation was official in state laws until the late 20th century (Clu Clewell & Taylor Anderson, 1995; Duster, 2009; Haynes, 2006; IHEP, 2010; Masters, 2014), as exemplified by the Supreme Court decision in the Plessey v. Ferguson case. This decision upheld the constitutionality of racial segregation under the “separate but equal” doctrine. The case was brought before the court because in 1892 a Black passenger, Homer Plessy refused to sit in a car for blacks. The Supreme Court rejected the claim that Plessy’s constitutional rights were violated and gave the ruling that a state law that “implies merely a legal distinction” between whites and blacks did not conflict with the 13th and 14th Amendments (Plessy v Ferguson, 1896). The outcome of this case encouraged restrictive “Jim Crow” legislation and practices.

In the history of Blacks in higher education, the World Wars figure prominently as a catalyst for bringing about improvement (Haynes, 2006; IHEP, 2010; Masters, 2014). The demand for troops allowed Blacks to join the U.S. Army. This caused mixed feelings. Some were not in support of Black men taking up the cause, but for others, this allowed the US to see Black men in a different light, as Black men who enlisted in the army gave their lives for a country that saw them as sub-human and less than (Masters, 2014). In the aftermath of the Second World War, it can be argued that higher education for Blacks became a real possibility in large part because of the G.I. Bill. The G.I. Bill was expanded to include Blacks, and although they did not benefit in a similar magnitude to their White counterparts, it still helped their cause (Haynes, 2006; IHEP, 2010; Masters, 2014). To this end, Hilary

Herbol postulated that:

Clearly the G.I. Bill was a crack in the wall of racism that had surrounded the American university system. It forced predominantly white colleges to allow a larger number of blacks to enroll, contributed to a more diverse curriculum at many historically black universities, and helped provide a foundation for the gradual growth of the black middle class. (Masters, 2014, p. 20)

The G.I. bill enabled Black students to have access to a level of education from which they had been largely excluded. In addition, it facilitated the provision of education to future civil rights leaders and activists (Haynes, 2006; IHEP, 2010; Masters, 2014). The point above is of tremendous significance when it is considered that the heightened activity of the Civil Rights movement occurred simultaneously with revolutionary changes in higher education for Blacks.

Furthermore, at the zenith of the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s, prominent and well-educated Black leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and the Big Six campaigned long and hard for equality of opportunity for Black students. The central argument advanced by Civil Rights activists was that Black students had a right to receive the same education as their White counterparts (Duster, 2009; Haynes, 2006; IHEP, 2010; Masters, 2014). Notable examples included the Little Rock Nine, who enrolled in all-White Central High School in Little Rock in 1957, Ruby Bridges who became the first Black student to integrate into an all-White elementary school, and James Meredith, who was the first student to integrate into the University of Mississippi. These students, along with many others, enrolled in White schools under a wave of intense verbal and physical harassment.

The demand for educational opportunities as part of the Civil Rights movement reached its climax with the landmark court decision of *Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* (1954) which was instrumental in overturning legally entrenched segregation of

education (Duster, 2009; Haynes, 2006; IHEP, 2010; Masters, 2014). Even though this case, along with the efforts of the Civil Rights activists, improved the realities for Blacks in regard to access to education, Blacks continued to have troubled and compromised interaction with higher education (Clu Clewell & Taylor Anderson, 1995; Haynes, 2006; IHEP, 2010; Masters, 2014). The historical challenges of discrimination stubbornly persist and are greatly compounded when taken in conjunction with various other barriers such as finance and inadequate pre-college preparation (Britt, 2014; Palmer, Davis & Hilton, 2009). Accordingly, the aforementioned historical precedent provides a solid framework for the exploration of the present challenges faced by Blacks in higher education, in particular, Black men.

Challenges Experienced by Black Men in Higher Education

Although Blacks have made significant strides in higher education, the statistics of recent years paint a very precarious picture. Though the percentage of Blacks earning college degrees has nearly doubled over the past 20 years, Blacks receive only 10% of college degrees, 12% of graduate degrees, and 7% of doctoral degrees (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). Blacks are more likely than other ethnic groups to attend lower-quality institutions and less likely to graduate (Mettler, 2014). The reality of Blacks in higher education is a microcosm of the broader societal reality facing Blacks in America (Naylor et al., 2015). Black Americans are more likely to be represented among the ranks of the unemployed and constitute the low-income segment of society. In addition, Blacks are more likely to live in poverty and remain trapped in a cycle of poverty (Naylor et al., 2015).

Blacks comprise 13% of the U.S. population, but 24.1% of Blacks ages 18 to 64 live in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). Therefore, the cost is arguably one of the major problems confronting Blacks in higher education (Naylor et al., 2015; Pais, 2011). The high cost of a college education is universally acknowledged in American society. The argument was made that between 1988 and 2016, the median household income in the United States

grew by a little over 11 % — while the average price of a four-year education at a public college in the U.S. increased by over 200 % (Mettler, 2014). Although over 70% of all college students are enrolled in a state university, the budgets at these universities continue to decrease for a myriad of reasons (Naylor et al., 2015). In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crises, there were significant budget cuts from state and local governments, and in the ensuing years up to 2012, public funding decreased by 23% on average per full-time-equivalent student (Blumenstyk, 2015; State Higher Education Executive Officers, 2013). To compensate for the budgetary decrease, tuition was increased to offset the reductions in state funding (Blumenstyk, 2015; State Higher Education Executive Officers, 2013).

Students from low-income homes have invariably suffered unequal access to post-secondary education as a result of the rising costs of tuition. Pell Grants covered 80% of tuition costs in 1980, whereas today they cover only 31% (College Board, 2013). If paying the costs of college is sometimes proving challenging for middle-class families, it stands to reason that the cost of tuition effectively shuts the door to college for students from low-income minority families—especially Black men (Bailey & Dynarski, 2011; Cuyjet, 2009). This argument is substantiated by the statistics which denote that in 2011, 82% of high-income students went to college in comparison to 53% of low-income students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Also, students from upper-income families are nine times more likely to graduate from college than students from lower income families (Mortenson, 2012).

Income level, in conjunction with the parental level of education, is the most powerful predictors of a child's education level (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2011). The previously described circumstances of the preponderance of Blacks in poverty efficiently prevent Black men from accessing higher education (Naylor et al., 2015). Furthermore, when Black men from low-income families gain access to higher education, the cost of higher education in

conjunction with their income level prevents them from graduating from college. Costs serve to restrict access to and completion of higher education for Black men (Naylor et al., 2015).

The census data for Black men in higher education is stark; 12.9% of Black men have a college degree compared to 22.3% of White men. Additionally, 6.3% of Black men hold an advanced degree compared to 13.2% of their White counterparts. It is particularly noteworthy that more graduate degrees are earned by Black women than Black men: 8.5% compared to 6.3% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). Interestingly, the participation rate for Black men in higher education is lower than that of women from all racial groups (Lee & Ransom, 2011).

Black Students at PWI

Cost, however, is not the only challenge that Black men experience in higher education. As a number of challenges accompany the admission and subsequent enrollment of Black men at PWIs. Many Black men attend PWIs for a myriad of reasons such as the ratio of PWIs to HBCUs, the location of HBCUs, and the availability of scholarships and fields of study (Britt, 2014). One of the chief reasons for the attendance of Black males at PWIs is due to Ivy League or elite status (Britt, 2014). The earnings for students graduating from elite institutions are 45% higher than earnings for students from non-elite institutions (Carnevale & Stroh, 2013). In the words of one Black student, Fleming stated,

Wanting as we do, the best we can get in the way of education—the best as defined by endowment, facilities, library books, publishing faculty, and the like... it is only natural to assume that education from Harvard is better than one from Morehouse.
(Walters, 2017, p. 17)

The reality of being a minority in a PWI can often be daunting for Black men (McDonald, 2011). Black men often have difficulty graduating due to numerous factors at PWIs (Wood, 2017). In 2011, for example, Black men in institutions of higher education increased from less than 20% in 2010 to nearly 40% (National Center for Education

Research, 2011). However, despite an increase in Black male enrollment, the disparity of Black male persistence in higher education has not improved at the same rate (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). In 2010, 1,341,354 Black men were enrolled in post-secondary institutions, yet only 33.9% of the 2003 cohort of Black men in four-year institutions had graduated in six years (National Center for Education Research, 2011). By contrast, 58.2% of White men from the 2003 cohort completed their studies within the same six-year period (National Center for Education Research, 2011). There is an expansive gap between the length of time it takes to complete college for Blacks and Whites at PWIs (Harper, Berhanu, Davis & McGuire, 2015). Data released from the U.S. Department of Education in 2012 revealed that the graduation rate of Blacks was an abysmal 39%, showing an achievement gap of over 20 percentage points when compared to the rate for White male students (Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 2013). This reality is even more startling when it is taken into consideration that, Black male college completion rates are the lowest among both sexes and all racial/ethnic groups in U.S. higher education (Harper, 2012; National Center for Education Statistics, 2012; Strayhorn, 2008).

In addition, enrollment and persistence rates of Black males in higher education have also remained egregiously lower than for students from other ethnic groups compounded by the consistently low enrollment at PWIs (Harper et al., 2015; Palmer et al., 2010; Tate, 2008). That is, Black men are underrepresented in higher education and more specifically at PWIs. In more specific terms, Black men accounted for less than 4% of full-time undergraduates at public colleges and universities between 2006 and 2010 (Harper, Williams, & Blackman, 2013). There is an inextricable link between the underrepresentation of Blacks at PWIs, their rate of persistence, and the length of time it takes to graduate. As a result, the low representation of Blacks at PWIs increases the likelihood that Black men have a perception of exclusion from the dominant campus culture (Britt, 2014). This exclusion is often more than

perception as because of historical precedence; there is institutional racism that essentially reinforces the social exclusion and isolation of Blacks.

Institutional racism as a concept is popularly attributed to Kwame Ture and Charles Hamilton's 1967 work *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation*, where Ture explored examples of overt and covert forms of racism at the institution level (Walters, 2017). Accordingly, Black men experience on the campus of PWIs and its affiliated institutional culture as isolating, alienating, and hostile (Strayhorn, 2013). These issues are heightened after it is considered that Black male students often do not have any mentors and role models on the campus of the PWIs (Britt, 2014). Data from 2014, show that Black male administrators made up 5.2% of the total population of full-time employees at colleges and universities excluding full-time/part-time faculty (Snyder, de Brey, & Dillow, 2016).

This reality has severe implications for the academic success, persistence and graduation rates of Black male students, as research has pointed out that students' sense of belonging is as a crucial indicator for persistence and success among all college students irrespective of their racial origin (Edman & Brazil 2008; McDonald, 2011; Wood, 2017). A student's sense of community/belonging can be described as "the perception among students that they belong in a setting and are involved harmoniously with others there" (Berryhill & Bee, 2007, p. 32). Subsequently, this social and psychological entrenchment enhances rates of persistence resulting in an increased likelihood of student retention (Hausmann, Ye, Schofield & Woods, 2009). However, in the case of Black men, the lack of belonging and a sense of community often impair their academic abilities and outcomes because of negative psychological consequences (Berryhill & Bee, 2007).

The sense of belonging is directly correlated to institutional belonging and has also been identified as having a direct effect on institutional commitment and persistence among Black students (Edman & Brazil, 2008; Hausmann et al., 2009). To elaborate further on this

perspective, isolation is closely connected to the sense of belonging. Therefore feelings of isolation can cause students to break the routine, interrupt their study habits and severely diminish or even eradicate their academic interest and motivation (Hausmann et al., 2009; Wood, 2017). In this vein, Berryhill & Bee (2007) posited that Black students' "psychological sense of community—the perception that they belong and are involved with others—was significantly impacted by the campus' racial climate" (p. 10).

A landmark study conducted by Smith, Allen, and Danley (2007) using a sample of Black male undergraduates from five different PWIs substantiated this argument. The participants unanimously gave the response that they perceived their campuses as being more hostile toward Black men when compared with their peers from other racial/ethnic groups. This finding is significant as an unwelcoming campus climate can impair students' achievement. Another study by Harper and Hurtado (2007) which examined campus racial climates also confirmed that Black undergraduates consistently experience exclusion at many PWIs. Findings from the study also indicated that Black men on PWIs have repeated exposure to racial tension and have inadequate social lives, which ultimately causes them to feel alienated (Allen, 2010; Cuyjet, 2006).

Another study conducted by researchers from various PWIs produced outcomes which denoted that undergraduate Black males at PWIs felt unwelcomed and had concerns for their safety (Parker et al., 2016). Beyond the most visible aspect of physical safety, Black males felt as though there was no safe space available to voice concerns or injustices faced on their campuses (Parker et al., 2016). Wilkins (2014) compared the collegiate integration process for first-generation Black men to first-generation White men. Results from the study delineated that first-generation White students experienced feelings of normalcy, were able to navigate positively through socioeconomic differences among peers, gained access to resources and opportunities (largely through friendships and networks), and found success in

avoiding trouble (Wilkins, 2014). First-generation Black students did not fare as well. Black students had to leverage their Blackness, felt socially invisible and excluded, were often spoken to in adolescent language and often presented images that deviated from stereotypical perceptions of Black men. In addition, Black students at PWIs face many negative stereotypes (Helm, 2013; Wilkins, 2014).

Black students at PWIs invariably have to contend with negative stereotypes (Britt, 2014; Strayhorn, 2013). Among these negative stereotypes are the conceptualization of Black men as thugs and the belief that Black males are intellectually inferior, violent, predisposed to drug use, and are incompatible with higher education altogether (Bailey & Moore, 2004; Harper & Nichols, 2008). There has been a significant focus in the academic literature about how and why Black men are the most stereotyped individuals in U.S. society (Ancis, Sedlacek, & Mohr, 2000; Carr & Steele, 2010; Harper, 2015; Harper & Nichols, 2008). Consequently, the environments surrounding colleges and universities mirror this societal trend (Carr & Steele, 2010; Harper, 2015; Steele & Aronson, 1995). Black undergraduate college students perceive and experience more racism than their non-Black counterparts at PWIs (Ancis, Sedlacek, & Mohr, 2000). The continuous and persistent experience of racism can and does affect Black men on both the physical and mental levels (Helm, 2013). Utsey (1998) described the stress concerned with continued racist encounters as race-related stress. This characterization is also closely connected to the concept of racial micro-aggression. That is there is “attributional ambiguity of everyday racial discrimination, the daily manifestations of racism in many areas of life and multiple similarities between microaggressive incidents and items that comprise measures of race-related stress/perceived discrimination toward Black Americans” (Wing Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal & Esquilin, 2007, p. 272).

The continuous experience of racism and race-related stress by Blacks often has grave consequences on their health and overall well-being (Cross, 1991; Reynolds, Sneva, & Beehler, 2010; Utsey, 1998). Furthermore, the stress resulting from racism has been linked to issues such as negative self-esteem, depression, and anxiety (Reynolds, Sneva, & Beehler, 2010). The stress associated with racism is a continuing problem on college campuses and can have a significant adverse influence on the academic and social performance of Black men in institutions of higher learning (Griffin, Jayakumar, Jones & Allen, 2010; Steele & Aronson, 1995; Utsey, 1998).

Racism-related stress has been shown to negatively affect Black male students' academic motivation in coursework, homework, class attendance, and participation (Reynolds, Sneva, & Beehler, 2010). These factors tremendously impair Black men's overall academic coursework and performance, ultimately resulting in academic underperformance and declining rates of persistence, retention, and graduation (Reynolds, Sneva, & Beehler, 2010). This state of affairs also results in stereotype threat.

According to Carr and Steele (2010) stereotype threat is when a negative stereotype becomes self-relevant "for something one is doing, for an experience one is having, or for a situation one is in, that has relevance to one's self-definition" (p. 616). The main condition which allows for the existence of stereotype threat is that the individual in whom the stereotype is imposed upon must identify with the domain being evaluated (Steele & Aronson, 1995; Carr & Steele, 2010). Therefore, the stereotyped individual must identify in some way with the identity being challenged for stereotype threaten to exist (Carr & Steele, 2010). Furthermore, Carr and Steele (2010) contend that negative stereotypes produce a threatening environment through the "pressure not to confirm the stereotype for fear of being judged or treated regarding it" (p. 89). It must be highlighted that stereotype threat is a

situational threat that affects any group of individuals around which a stereotype exists (Steele, 1997).

The literature contains various examples where stereotype threats have been delineated as affecting Black students' performance on standardized tests at prestigious private institutions such as Stanford (Steele & Aronson, 1995), and large public institutions such as the University of Michigan (Blascovich, Spencer, Quinn, & Steele, 2001). Notwithstanding, stereotypes affect peoples of various ethnic groups (Aronson, 2002). Though, Black men in higher education are more prone to experiencing stereotypes in general and are thus more susceptible to stereotype threats and the resultant threatening environments (Carr & Steele, 2010; Ancis et al., 2000; Fries-Britt & Griffin, 2007; 1997; Steele & Aronson, 1995). In this regard, the experience of stereotype threats has resulted in significant negative academic, social, physical, and psychological repercussions for Black male students (Dorvil, 2011; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Owens & Massey, 2011; Utsey, 1998).

Fordham and Ogbu (1986) advanced the view that internal racism and fear of confirming the stereotype of "acting white" (p. 177) resulted in lower levels of academic achievement in school for some Black men. To compound this reality, health risk factors for stress, anxiety, and hypertension have been closely connected to stereotypes and stereotype threats (Steele, Spencer & Aronson, 2002; Utsey, 1998; Steele & Aronson, 1995).

Blascovich et al., (2001) clearly illustrated this point by articulating that in the wake of stereotypes, Blacks encountered elevated blood pressure levels over the course of a 20-minute period. This argument is consistent with the prevailing views in the literature where there has been prolific documentation that in the United States Blacks are far more susceptible to racism and racial interactions in comparison to other ethnic/racial groups (Pieterse & Carter, 2007). Harrell (2000) has examined the bridging of the gap between racism and stress, and subsequently articulated that the concept of race-related stress or "the

race-related transactions between individuals or groups and their environment that emerge from the dynamics of racism are perceived to tax or exceed existing individual and collective resources or threaten well-being” (p. 44) . Interestingly, Pieterse, Neville, Todd, and Carter (2012) advanced that among Blacks, men are more heavily affected psychologically than women in regard to their experiences with racism-related stress. To apply this argument to the higher education context, when racism related-stress takes effect, Black men are increasingly susceptible to become disengaged from academic activities, have negative perceptions of the institution, and withdraw socially (Reynolds et al., 2010). Ultimately these negative implications of stereotype threat have been described as a direct or indirect limiting factor to Black male students’ academic and social success in college (Ancis et al., 2000; Dorvil, 2011; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Owens & Massey, 2011; Utsey, 1998).

Some of the challenges experienced by Black men during college originate way before college. In many instances, young Black males are unable to access college and are discouraged from even applying, much more matriculating to college (Berg, 2016; Carnevale & Stroh, 2013; Hauptman, 2012). A compelling reason for this is that the media promulgates the depiction of successful Black men as athletes, musicians, actors, comedians, and other professions that require little or no formal education (Bryant, 2015; Wood, 2017). Consequently, the proliferation of these images encourages Black boys to believe that academic accomplishments are not a prerequisite for wealth, prestige, and success, and also that black men can only be successful in fields that do not require formal education (Bryant, 2015).

Preparatory curricula and affiliated courses also create serious challenges for Black men as many are discouraged from utilizing them or have incomes that do not make them an option when they do matriculate to college (Strayhorn, 2008). In unequivocal terms, many Black men are unprepared for the academic rigors of college (Bryant, 2015; Musoba, 2011).

This argument is substantiated by that fact that across various measurement indicators including SAT scores, Advanced Placement courses, enrollment in rigorous, mathematics and science courses, high school graduation rates, and high school exit exams over the last ten years Black males are underperforming (Camara, 2013; Musoba, 2011). To better understand this circumstance, the context of the young Black male must be seriously taken into consideration.

Black men predominantly exist in families that represent the lowest and the lower end of the social and economic scale. Many times, the parent(s) did not have the benefit of a college education (Harper, 2012; Pais, 2011). As a result, they do not know how to facilitate their child's preparation for college and their journey through college (Hahs-Vaughn, 2004; Harper, 2012; Pais, 2011). The actuality that many Black men are first-generation college students creates a whole set of issues, especially when compounded by income status.

The phenomenon of many young Black men graduating high school unprepared for the rigors of college is predicated on a variety of factors, most notably the deficiencies and disparities in school systems with high minority populations (Bryant, 2015; Musoba, 2011). These schools are woefully under-resourced and inadequate regarding course offerings and systems. This reality has severe implications for the Black males who attend them.

Against the context that, students require access to high-level and advanced courses accompanied by high-quality instruction in order to best take on the academic requirements of the college as instruction in these courses will increase their content knowledge and, nurture and hone their higher order thinking skills. Moreover, it has been established that there is a close connection between taking additional coursework, specifically mathematics, and college readiness (Bryant, 2015; Musoba, 2011). Furthermore, high school students who have access to and pursue college-level courses have an increased likelihood of seeking out

and succeeding in institutions of higher learning (McGee, 2013; Roderick, Coca, & Nagaoka, 2011).

Another dimension to this issue is that even when college preparatory courses are a constituent of the school curriculum, Black students have a very low enrollment rate in these classes. This low enrollment rate can be attributed to a myriad of factors, including the proliferation of successful Black men in fields that require little or no formal education, perhaps insinuating that college prep courses are unnecessary (Bryant 2015). Black students are sometimes steered into lower level courses instead of college-level courses, especially in the case of low-income students. The aforementioned action is done primarily because Black students are not adequately prepared in the lower grades and teachers have lower expectations for them (Bryant, 2015).

According to the United States Department of Education (2014), even though Black students make up 16% of the high school student population, they comprise just 8% of the enrollment in calculus. In addition, Black students account for just 9 % of the pool of students taking advanced placement courses and only 4 % of students who earn a qualifying score on an advanced placement examination (Bryant, 2015). Furthermore, Black women are more likely to pursue many higher-level college preparatory classes than their Black male peers (Bryant, 2015).

Individually, the previously described challenges faced by Black men can severely hamper and even derail their college career, but their culmination can be completely detrimental to the collegiate experience for Black men. Without support, these challenges may compromise the academic achievement of Black men, often leading to their overall dissatisfaction with college (Strayhorn, 2008). This argument has much weight because according to Tinto (1993) dissatisfaction is a significant predictor and precursor to a student leaving college. This dissatisfaction may be transmuted into disinterest resulting in

withdrawal if Black men cannot access and or devise coping strategies to negotiate these challenges individually or as a whole.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism as a concept must be explored in order to facilitate a thorough investigation of the phenomenon and use of multicultural centers at PWIs. The genesis of multiculturalism can be traced to demands made by national minorities and immigrants during the 1971 Trudeau administration in Canada (Fleras & Elliott, 2002; Guo, 2011). These demands encompassed cultural, ethnic and political elements. Following which, the concept was used in Australia and the United States (Canatan, 2009; Yanik, 2013). Essentially, multiculturalism espouses regional, linguistic, and cultural unity within the concept of the nation-state. It is perceived as a response to the exclusionary policies and practices of the nation-state through the incorporation of cultural and ethnic diversity in the political domain (Journet, 2009; Kastoryano, 2009). Multiculturalism encompasses humanism, human rights, and equal civil rights as well as being a new political process (Qi, 2011). It is largely believed to be an emergence from the coexistence of nations in various facets that include language, religion, nationality, culture, history, and geography (Shepherd, 2010; Yanik, 2012). It is also a concept that emerges from the coexistence of nations coming from different roots in terms of language, religion, nationality, culture, history, and geography (Shepherd, 2010; Yanik, 2012). Accordingly, at its core multiculturalism is concerned with cultural diversity or ethnic differences that have intersected through culture (Parekh, 2000). The central goal of the multicultural model is renewal in accordance with the contemporary requirements of democracy and the right claims (Delanty, 2002). In the absence of a uniform social structure, multiculturalism facilitates the coexistence of different identities and cultures, most importantly, differences are not regarded as conflicts but a source of richness (Banks & Banks, 2010).

Multiculturalism in Higher Education

Multiculturalism in higher education is perceived to have been influenced by the G.I. Bill in the 1940s (Banks, 2010). Of particular concern to this study was that multiculturalism in higher education that specifically focused on Blacks was facilitated through The Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Banks, 2010). At the beginning of the twentieth century, the call for multiculturalism originated not only from civil rights groups but also from the faculty, students, business leaders, and the general public (Banks, 2010). These calls were believed to be predicated on the perspective that a singular, Eurocentric perspective has had negative consequences for individual students, and by extension, the wider American society. In addition, excluding multiculturalism in student admissions and even in the various elements of the curriculum has truncated the students' learning experience. This reality has led to the consequence that they are ill-prepared to function in the diverse democracy of America (Banks, 2010). The argument for multiculturalism was strengthened by the perspective that exclusionary practices contravene the purpose of higher education. A purpose focused on deepening students' understanding of what is known, how it has come to be known, and how to build on previous knowledge to create new knowledge. Seeing that, these exclusionary practices undermined the purpose of higher education by eliminating the voices of those whose experiences differ from those traditionally represented. Ultimately, this results in an inconsistency between the rhetoric and the practice of democracy (Banks, 2010). Even though much progress has been made in American society, it is still very much segregated by race in residential patterns. In light of this reality multiculturalism in higher education becomes even more of an imperative. Largely because institutions of higher education are precious mediating public spaces where, unlike most of American society, there is an inherent opportunity for different groups to live, study, and think side by side (Banks, 2010). In this regard, institutions of higher education present tremendous opportunities for a

multicultural environment. Despite, that institutions of higher learning in American society have a long way to go in terms of entrenching multiculturalism on their various college campuses, some progress has been made in terms of admissions, curriculum development, and the establishment of multicultural centers (Banks, 2010).

Multicultural Centers in Higher Education

The origin of multicultural centers (MCs) can be traced back to the desegregation of education (Sanders, 2016). In theory, the desegregation of schools was supposed to ensure that Black students would be granted equal access to resources, intellectual avenues, and other educational opportunities if they were allowed to attend the same institutions as their White counterparts; however, the reality was a stark contrast to these ideas (Getting to College, 2014). The Black community began creating and building their own spaces to realize the proposed objectives of educational desegregation while promoting a sense of support and family (Princes, 2005). In the 1960s, the talk and eventual creation of Black cultural centers started on the campuses of predominantly White institutions following the Black Student Movement as part of the Civil Rights movement (Hefner, 2002). Even though the family approach is currently encouraged, the focus has shifted to a more tactical method for addressing issues of race, gender, class, and other aspects of social identity (Kuh, 2009). By way of co-curricular programming, these centers provide learning opportunities through leadership positions, diversity initiatives, and discussions on education disciplines and social constructs that aid in the holistic development of students as they persist in college (Kuh, 2009).

The work of MCs significantly evolved from the first centers established in the 1960s (Hord, 2005). MCs began as cultural safe houses for students of color; however, their offerings have shifted over time to highlight the importance of having more academically and socially ethnically receptive places on campus (Sanders, 2016). Tomlinson (1992)

administered a qualitative survey to people who worked in MCs in the northeastern and southern regions of the US from both private and public institutions to assess cultural centers and to determine how these college campuses operate. He argued that cultural centers function based on four main elements: cultural education, student support services, resources, and cultural entertainment (Tomlinson, 1992). More than a decade later, researchers began to expand on MC infrastructures to develop centers that would prove most useful for students (Sanders, 2016). Jenkins (2008) suggested a five-point plan framework for the centers and suggested what students would need in order for learning to occur: (a) cultural education, (b) cultural engagement, (c) cultural student development, (d) cultural community building, and (e) cultural environmental enhancement.

The talks and the eventual creation of Black cultural centers started on the campuses of PWIs following the Black Student Movement as part of the National Civil Rights movement (Hefner, 2002). In the wake of the momentum created by the Civil Rights and Black Power movements during the 1960s, there were increased incidents of student protest. Following the assassination of the renowned Civil Rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., student protest, and student-student activism became prevalent on college campuses across America (Rojas, 2007). However, this occurrence must be contextualized. In the 1960s after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, the Higher Education Act, and the GI Bill, traditionally White institutions (TWIs) (now PWIs) experienced a large influx of Black students.

Black enrollment increased from 3,000 in 1960 to 98,000 in 1970 (Patton, 2006a). Also during the years from 1960 to 1977, Black student matriculation at all higher education institutions skyrocketed from 227,000 to 1.1 million (Patton, 2006a). Notwithstanding, these Black students were localized in very minimal numbers across the PWIs and were faced with the grave reality that, university faculty, staff, and students did not provide the necessary support for Black students. Black students experienced feelings of isolation and

marginalization, which was exacerbated by the prevalent overt and covert racism which was ignored by administrators (Rojas, 2007; Sanders, 2016).

Responding to this deplorable treatment and spurred on by the Civil Rights movement, Black students and their supporters staged protests and sit-ins at various PWIs and voiced their demands for the establishment of Black Studies programs/departments, an increase in Black enrollment, and recruitment of Black faculty (Hefner, 2002; Patton, 2006b Sanders, 2016). The Black students came together to form Black Student Unions and were unified in their call for universities to make adjustments for the needs of the Black student population. Also, Black students were united in their efforts of formulating and presenting various lists of demands to the different university administrations. A recurrent order was the allocation of a center or house where Black students could gather. At the outset, university administrators resisted the demands made by students, but the student protestors held firm (Rojas, 2007; Sanders, 2016). University administrators developed Black Culture Centers (BCC) and Black student unions or associations.

The concept of the multicultural center came into being in the 1980s and 1990s after the BCC had been in existence for many years, resulting from the influx in enrollment of students from various racial and ethnic backgrounds at PWIs (Sanders, 2016; Weed, 2016). The increasing diversity of the student population brought the question of the relevance of ethnic-specific centers to the forefront. That is, these centers would have to cater to not only Black students but also other minority students.

Among the prevailing views was the argument that BCCs were no longer consistent with their original mission and were no longer relevant to the university campuses as they were not able to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population (Sanders, 2016). Consequently, some universities across the breadth and depth of the United States redefined the missions of their BCCs, developed multicultural centers, and poured millions of

dollars into them in an attempt to meet the needs of an ever-changing student population. Notwithstanding, proponents of BCCs argue that these newer initiatives may be a sign that race-specific centers will be eliminated entirely (Hefner, 2002). BCCs in its new form as MCs have been pivotal in enabling Black men in college to transcend internal and institutional challenges and persist to graduation (Sanders, 2016; Weed, 2016).

Multicultural Centers as a Key Coping Strategy for Black Men

Coping can be described as an active process of managing difficult circumstances, expending energy to find solutions to problems, and taking steps to master, minimize, reduce or tolerate conflict (Snyder, 2014; Weiten & Lloyd, 2008). Research has shown that the process of coping is multidimensional (Snyder, 2014; Weiten & Lloyd, 2008). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) depicted that the ability to cope is often a coalescing of the environment, its demands, and available resources, as well as a person's disposition that influences the appraisal of stress and the affiliated availability of resources for coping. At this juncture, it is crucial that the argument is made that the likelihood that an event becomes stressful is highly dependent on the extent to which an individual perceives it will affect his or her life (Walters, 2017). This point is of special relevance to Black male students attending PWIs as they may perceive PWIs as the only real opportunity toward improving their lives and achieving social mobility. Therefore, the probability that they might not perform well academically or even drop out of college becomes a source of immense stress.

One person may internalize the same event differently than another, driven by the interaction of their life experiences with the internalization of the event. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), the commitment of an individual or his or her concept of what is important is a significant motivating factor regarding how the individual will respond in a given situation. That said, a high level of commitment to what is at stake in a situation could increase the potential for a threat or challenge appraisal but could simultaneously spur the

individual into positive action. Furthermore, an individual's perception of his/ her personal or situational control (or lack thereof) influences his or her views regarding control over the outcome of a specific stressful circumstance.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) also pointed out that an individual's beliefs about the personal or situational control over an event is another factor that may affect how people believe they can control the outcome of a stressful experience. Ultimately, coping is predicated on unique life experiences and the student's impression and the actual effect of the event on his/her life (Lazarus, 2006). This distinction is of relevance to this study as it is focused on a subgroup of Black male college students who experience unique circumstances at a PWI and who experience events differently from both one another and White students.

Various coping strategies and combinations of coping strategies have been delineated as effectively offsetting the consequences of perceived negative events, by providing an alternative modality for transcending stressful life events such as those often experienced by Black men in their transition to and persistence through college (Walter, 2017; Wood, 2017). As previously established, enrollment at PWIs is often a stressful state of affairs for Black men. It must be highlighted those coping strategies are usually undertaken on an individual, racial, and institutional level, or a combination thereof (Walters, 2017; Wood, 2017). While, Black men employ a variety of coping strategies to overcome the internal and institutional challenges associated with attending PWIs (Walters, 2017; Wood, 2017), this research will focus on the contributions of multicultural centers to Black men's success.

The Importance of Multicultural Centers for Black Men at PWIs

MCs are a crucial coping strategy for Black men at PWIs. Essentially, MCs can mean the difference between a Black male student persisting toward graduation and dropping out of college after the first semester. Characteristically domiciled in the academic or student affairs divisions of universities (Bankole, 2005), these centers are often conceptualized as a safe

space for Black students where they can go to retreat from the perceived hostility of an unwelcoming campus community (Young & Hannon, 2002). They also provide a suite of pivotal university services such as academic and social support in the form of tutoring and mentorship, making the campus climate less intimidating, and reducing the attrition rates of the Black student (Bankole, 2005; Hefner, 2002; Hord, 2005; Patton, 2010; Pittman, 1994; Princes, 2004). In addition, they often function as an advocate for presenting issues and seeking ameliorative change concerning issues that affect Black students from university administrators. Some MCs go so far as recruiting prospective Black students as well. Through the provision of these services, the MCs provide a plethora of benefits for Black students: serving as a home away from home, assisting students in coping with feelings of isolation at PWIs, and helping them to transition to university life by providing programming and support services. Also, MCs have been instrumental in the affirmation of cultural identity via the use of educational initiatives so students can acquire knowledge of continental and diasporic African history and culture. Ultimately, MCs address the unique needs of the Black student population.

MCs are beneficial for both Black and non-Black students. Findings of a study conducted by Foote (2005) indicated that MCs act as spaces where Black students can cope with a hostile, unfriendly, or indifferent campus environment. Black alumni and current Black college students unanimously responded that they benefited from MCs in a myriad of ways (Foote, 2005). Interestingly, cultural centers also provide benefit to non-Black students as well. This argument is substantiated by Young & Hannon (2002) who espoused that these centers are instrumental in expanding the perspective of the academy. Other studies have indicated that cultural centers are pivotal in the recruitment and retention of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic groups, reinforced that cultural centers serve as a home away from home, assist students in coping with marginalization, and act as an avenue

for cultural pride and education (Jones & Williams, 2006; Patton, 2006a, 2006b; Strayhorn, Terrell, Redmond, & Walton, 2010).

Using the very specific example of the Black Student Center at a Northwestern University, Jones & Williams (2006) reported that Black undergraduates considered the center a haven, a home away from home, a place to talk about the problems and situations away from PWI stress. Moreover, Jones and Williams (2006) advanced that culture is a central contributory factor to the quality and quantity of students at PWIs. In keeping with the aforementioned arguments, Strayhorn (2013) revealed that cultural centers offer a variety of programs and services that are instrumental in facilitating a sense of belonging and helping in skill development for students. The findings also delineated that students perceived the cultural center as an affirmation of their presence on campus, which results in them having a sense of belonging and a sense that they mattered.

Though MCs have been in existence at PWIs since the 1960s, there has been a minimal academic inquiry into their roles, operating modalities, and their contribution to students' college outcomes (Sanders, 2016). Incidentally, since the first study that was conducted by Bennet (1971), there have been relatively few scholarly works on this topic (Sander, 2016). As exemplified by the fact that Bennet's (1971) study on BCCs was released nearly 45 years ago, there have been fewer than 20 published scholarly articles on this topic (Sander, 2016). None of the existing studies in this area (Hefner, 2002; Patton, 2010; Pittman, 1994; Young & Hannon, 2002), has explored the role that MCs have played in support of Black men specifically with academic and social collegiate challenges at PWIs.

Theoretical Framework

This study was conducted through the lenses of Tinto's Model of Integration (1975; 1993), Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST) (Dupree et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2003) and Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1999). Tinto's (1975) Model

of Integration was applicable to this study as it accounted for the social and academic experiences of Black men enrolled at PWIs. The Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST) (Dupree et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2003) is applicable to the study as it addresses the crucial intersection between the mainstream societal depiction of Black men, their own self-identity, and their coping responses at a PWI. Social Cognitive Theory is applicable to this study as it provides a context regarding how the environment of PWIs influence the coping strategies used by Black male students to overcome the inherent institutional challenges and eventually determine their ultimate performance or underperformance.

Tinto's Model of Integration

Tinto's (1975) model of integration was appropriate for this study as it accounts for the social and academic experiences of Black men enrolled at PWIs. In addition, it contextualizes the disparities in academic achievement among Black males at PWIs delineated in the literature specifically, their integration (or lack thereof) into the college experience.

Tinto's (1975) integration model espouses that there are two primary indicators of college students' success or persistence—social and academic integration. The concept underpins Tinto's (1975) model that the more a student integrates academically and socially, the greater the likelihood that the student will succeed in college. However, in presenting his arguments, he made a clear distinction between inclusion, involvement, and engagement which are often used interchangeably in the literature (Tinto, 1993). Tinto (1993) posited that participation and engagement denote readily observable behaviors whereas integration refers to a “value interaction such as arises when one perceives oneself as a valued member of a community” (p. 78). He further articulated that an intimate connection to the values and culture of the particular institution must be made by a student to experience integration (Tinto, 1993). Integration is essentially then a “state of being; [and] is based on perceptions

of student fit with their campus and, by extension, perceptions of interactions that reflect the values and norms of the institution and its culture” (Wolf-Wendel, Ward & Kinzie, 2009, p. 416). Accordingly, postulated issues of adjustment and feelings of isolation could impair the ability of a student to integrate, and ultimately undermine his potential for academic and social success (Wolf-Wendel, Ward & Kinzie, 2009).

Tinto (1975; 1993) further elaborated that greater levels of academic and social integration are correlated to greater levels of commitment to a student’s educational goals and to the institution which is ultimately affiliated with the outcome of positive academic performance and persistence. Following three revisions to his original model, Tinto (1993), outlined three key attributes that increase the predisposition of a student’s ability to persist or succeed in college: (a) a student’s background, (b) pre-college education, and (c) personal attributes. Based on his model revision, the indicators of socioeconomic status, educational expectations, and parent(s) level of education are used to determine a student’s background. Precollege education encompasses academic preparedness and social and educational ability,s while race and gender are constituents of personal attributes (Tinto, 1993).

In this revised model Tinto (1993) embedded the viewpoint that the variables of predisposed attributes and academic success can be mediated by the extent of academic and social interaction on campus. Tinto (1993) articulated the caveat that while many Black male students lack the predisposing factors, increased levels of academic and social integration can compensate for a deficit of predisposed experiences and ultimately lead to greater likelihood of academic success. Conversely, Tinto (1993) advanced that four types of experiences might force a student to withdraw from college prior to graduation prematurely: adjustment, difficulty, incongruence, and isolation.

Adjustment is the transition from home to college. For some students, the experience is too daunting and results in the student withdrawing from school (Tinto, 1993). Furthermore,

the adjustment to college can often be divided into two main elements, academic adjustment and social adjustment (Green, 2010). Academic adjustment is concerned with grade point average, enrollment status, and adhering to the academic standards of an institution. Whereas, social adjustment encompasses overall attachment to the institution, and college in general, social adaptation, extracurricular involvements, overall well-being and faculty interaction (Green, 2010). The inability to adjust to the environment of PWIs has been shown to decrease the likelihood of Black male academic and social success (Feagin, Vera, & Imani, 1996). In addition, Black male students often encounter cultural issues that impair their level of adjustment, like entrenched racial stereotypes that may result in an obligatory feeling of acquiescence. Furthermore, Black male college students are often conflicted by the pull or lack of encouragement from family and friends who may question their choice to pursue higher education (Dancy, 2009; Steele 1997; 1992). When the aforesaid are combined with inadequate college preparation and limited financial resources, it becomes very challenging for Black students to adjust to the academic and social realities at PWIs (Dancy, 2009).

Difficulty is described as the ability to perform academically and to meet the standards set by the college. If a student believes that the academic rigor of college too intense, the student then drops out (Tinto, 1993). Unfortunately, this has been the experience of many Black male students at PWIs. This outcome largely results from the reality that Black male college students are less prepared for the rigors of college-level coursework when compared to their counterparts from other racial groups (Bonner & Bailey, 2006; Britt, 2014; Harper, 2012; Palmer et al., 2009).

Incongruence refers to the college not meeting the students' needs, values, and interests. A student will withdraw from college if the culture and realities of the institution are at variance with the personality of the student (Tinto, 1993). The previously mentioned point has been experienced by many Black male students enrolled at PWIs. Mainly because of

racial, cultural, and even socio-economic differences, Black male students feel alienated and are less engaged in college classrooms, structured campus initiatives, and activities, educational experiences outside the classroom and even in extracurricular activities (Harper, 2012; Green, 2010).

Isolation sets in when students do not create or become a part of any social networks and do not have any meaningful relationships with their peers and faculty. The absence of a social network causes an individual to feel isolated and results in the withdrawal of the individual (Tinto, 1993). Black male students often feel isolated at PWIs (Easterwood, 2016). In addition, to being vastly outnumbered, the policies, practices, and even the social culture at these PWIs often represented the outlook of the dominant White culture (Easterwood, 2016; Guiffreda & Douthit, 2010; Walters, 2017). Furthermore, in some instances due to their race, White students refuse to interact academically and socially with Black male students (Easterwood, 2016; Guiffreda & Douthit, 2010). Moreover, Black male students experience direct and indirect racism, and in many cases lack an outlet for recourse. In many instances, the faculty at these institutions is overwhelmingly White and so Black male students believe that the faculty and mechanisms for assisting students reflect the prevailing dominant milieu of the PWI (Easterwood, 2016; Guiffreda & Douthit, 2010; Harbour, 2009). So Black students and more specifically Black male students felt alienated and excluded (McDonald, 2011). This psychological stress often resulted in the disengagement and eventual drop-out of Black male students (McDonald, 2011).

Even in the face of large-scale acceptance, the major criticism leveled at Tinto's (1993) model of integration is that it is not generalizable to ethnic minority students including Black men (Walter, 2017). In addition, the theory has been criticized for its emphasis on the assimilation and acculturation of students into the dominant college culture, which could prove to be counterproductive in the transition process for Black males (Walter, 2017).

Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST)

The PVEST framework is applicable to this study as it accounts for the way in which two key factors intersect to determine the coping strategies used by Black males at PWIs. This intersection involves the mainstream societal conceptualization and depiction of college-age Black men in addition to their own self-identity and self-concept. With the ultimate outcome being the determination of positive (or negative) coping strategies that are used in response to the stressors of being a historically marginalized and oppressed minority at a PWI.

The PVEST framework came into being as a result of researchers' challenge to enduring misconceptions about the identity development and schooling of non-dominant youth (Lee et al., 2003). Among these enduring misconceptions is the assumption of a singular pathway for identity development centered on European and European American children that fundamentally pathologizes the life course challenges of ethnic and racial minorities, as well as a persistent deficit perspective on minority children's home and community experiences (Dupree et al., 2009).

Other misconceptions include the pathologizing of experiences of minority youth, which is encapsulated by the perspective that minority youth are, "on the whole, homogenous and fundamentally different from the majority" (Dupree et al., p. 6). The PVEST framework is comprised of five components that consider the experiences of privilege and marginalization in identity development (Spencer, 1995; Spencer, Dupree, Cunningham, Harpalani, & Muñoz-Miller, 2003). The first component, net vulnerability, consists of stressors—such as race and gender stereotypes and historical processes of racial subordination and discrimination—that can be offset by protective factors, such as cultural socialization. Therefore, the negative societal stereotypes of Black men in society are a major element of the challenges they encounter on the campuses of PWIs. Seeing that, Black collegiate

students, more specifically Black men continue to be persistently challenged by the historical vestiges of discrimination as well as barriers which run the gamut from an inability to meet matriculation requirements to financial affordability (College Board, 2010; Gavins, 2009).

The second component, net stress engagement, consists of experiences that harm an individual's well-being and can be offset by social supports to negotiate those experiences. The third component includes developmentally appropriate coping strategies in response to stressors that can lead to adaptive or maladaptive solutions. In terms of the second and third components, the MC is a key supportive strategy that through cultural and academic support enables Black men to develop positive coping strategies to the stresses of being a historically marginalized minority at a PWI. MCs offer a suite of pivotal university services such as providing academic and social support in the form of tutoring and mentorship, making the campus climate less intimidating, and reducing the attrition rates of the Black student (Bankole, 2005; Hefner, 2002; Hord, 2005; Patton, 2010; Pittman, 1994; Princes, 2004). Over-time, MCs become stable coping responses that, in aggregate, lead to emergent identities. Emergent identities, the fourth component, lead to the final component of the PVEST model: the adverse or productive ways of being for a particular individual. Identity development, as it relates to race and culture, is framed as part of one's self-concept regarding an affiliation with or a commitment to one's ethnic or racial group (Spencer et al., 2003). The emergent identities component is also directly linked to this study as it speaks to coping strategies that Black people, and more specifically Black males, have used to deal with a history of oppression and marginalization. These coping strategies as a large part of the reality of Black males in the wider American society are also transferred to the microcosm of the campuses of PWIs.

PVEST theory provides a context for Black male resilience in relation to the plethora of challenges that they experience at PWIs. Furthermore, the theory account for the ways in

which the individual- growth, development, and self-identity of Black males intersect with negative stereotypes and historical coping strategies. This connection also ultimately extends to the use of coping strategies (that are either negative or positive) to address the challenges at PWIs.

Social Cognitive Theory

Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1999) is relevant to this research as it situates how the personal behaviors of Black male college students such as the use of MCs can result in positive outcomes for them at PWIs. Social Cognitive Theory also addresses how the environment of PWIs influence the coping strategies used by Black male students to overcome the inherent institutional challenges and eventually determine their ultimate performance or underperformance.

Social Cognitive Theory is premised on the intersection between the personal beliefs and actions of an individual with social structures and environmental events (Bandura, 1999). According to Bandura (1999), “persons are neither autonomous agents nor simply mechanical conveyors of animating environmental influences” (p.22). The concept of triadic reciprocal causation is used to explain the psychological functioning of humans in Social Cognitive Theory. The term triadic reciprocal causation denotes the process whereby factors such as cognitive, affective and biological events, behavioral patterns and environmental events operate as interacting determinants that influence one another bi-directionally (Bandura, 1999). Based on the tenets of this theory, the environment is not a monolithic entity.

Consequently, there are three types of environmental structures discussed in Social Cognitive Theory: the imposed environment, the selected environment, and the constructed environment. The imposed environment is the physical and sociocultural situation thrust upon people whether they like it or not (Bandura, 1999). Even though there is little control over its presence, there is leeway in how it is construed and reacted. In this regard, the environment is

only a potentiality because its rewarding and punishing aspects do not come into being until it is selectively activated by the relevant courses of action. The facet of the environment which becomes the actually experienced environment depends on how people behave (Bandura, 1999). The choice of associates, activities, and milieus constitutes the selected environments. The environments that are selected do not exist as a potentiality waiting to be selected and activated. Rather people construct social environments and institutional systems through their generative efforts. The construction, construal, and selection of environments affect the nature of the reciprocal interplay between personal, behavioral and environmental factors (Bandura, 1999). That is to say, the environment and its effect on the behavior of a person are influenced by the environment that is chosen, the associations and activities that encompass that environment, and how its realities are constructed by the individual. The relevance of the presence of MCs on PWIs is an embodiment of the above-mentioned point. Seeing that, the MC is a milieu in the wider environment of the PWI that the Black male students can use to transcend the negative issues of the wider environment. As previously mentioned, the MCs provide academic and social support in the form of tutoring and mentorship, making the campus climate less intimidating, and reducing the attrition rates of the Black student (Bankole, 2005; Hefner, 2002; Hord, 2005; Patton, 2010; Pittman, 1994; Princes, 2004).

Toward this end, people are producers and products of social systems. Social structures are created by human activity to organize, guide, and regulate human affairs in given domains by authorized rules and sanctions. The sociocultural practices, in turn, impose constraints and provide resources and opportunity structures for personal development and functioning. Therefore, based on this dynamic bi-directionality of influence, Social Cognitive Theory rejects a dualism between personal agency and a disembodied social structure.

Social Cognitive Theory forms an important context for this study as it accounts for the use of the MCs by Black male students in order to offset the challenges that are faced in the

wider campus environment of PWIs. Essentially, the theory situates the use of the MCs on the PWI to facilitate the development and effective functioning of Black men in an environment that overlooks and is hostile to them.

Conclusion

In the many years since Ronald Roach asked the question, “Where are the Black men on campus?” (Strayhorn, Blakewood & DeVita, 2008, p. 1) in an article in *Black Issues in Higher Education*, its relevance has not been diminished but instead has intensified. Between that time and now, the challenges that Black men face in higher education have not improved. Considering that, Black male students have increased difficulty accessing higher education due to issues in their ‘educational pipeline’ and the rising costs of tuition. Furthermore, the gap between the graduation rate of Black male students and their racial counterparts has widened. This reality has grave consequences since the attainment of at least a Bachelor’s degree is a requirement for the possibility of getting decent employment opportunities considering that the labor market has evolved to a place where most jobs require a college degree.

The present difficult life outcomes for Black men could become even worse, if decisive and sustainable ameliorative steps are not taken to ensure that an increasing number of Black men gain access to, persist through and eventually graduate from college and universities. A critical factor in the equation is to ensure that there are entrenched strategies in place to help Black men cope with the inevitable internal and institutional challenges, primarily when they are enrolled at PWIs. In this regard, the role of the MCs is especially crucial as they have been instrumental in helping Black men persist in successful college outcomes. Accordingly, it is essential that the services offered by these MCs are available to Black men so as to have the ripple effect of improving the graduation rate of Black men in higher education.

Chapter Summary

The stubbornly persistent underachievement of Black males in higher education is of growing national concern in American society. Considering that, the consequences are not localized to the Black community but instead has the potential to influence the broader culture negatively. In this regard, the underachievement of Black men has been attracting a lot of scholarly attention in various permutations. Against this context, this chapter examined the literature regarding this persistent issue in higher education. The historical chain of causation for the present day realities of Black males in higher education was established. The various types of challenges that Black males experience in higher education from the internal and institutional dimensions were examined, and the results from various studies were used to substantiate the arguments put forward. Subsequently, the importance of coping strategies to help Black male college students transcend internal and institutional challenges at PWIs and persist to graduation was reviewed. The concept of multiculturalism was explored in a general sense and then more specifically as it relates to higher education. Following which, there was a focus on the origin and function of MCs, in addition to the use of multicultural centers as a coping strategy for Black men at PWIs. Finally, there was an examination of the relevant theoretical frameworks namely: Tinto's model of Integration, PVEST, and Social Cognitive Theory. The integration of the literature on Black male students in higher education helped to inform this research study in pragmatic and insightful ways.

CHAPTER 3 METHODS

Introduction

This chapter discusses the framework for the research methodology that was used to guide the study. The statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, and the research questions as outlined in Chapter One are restated. Following which, there is an in-depth examination of the research design that was used to execute this study. In addition, there is a focus on the population and the affiliated sample, in addition to the sampling technique that was employed. Subsequently, there is a discussion regarding data collection and analysis, followed by limitations, delimitations, and assumptions. Finally, the steps that were taken to ensure the ethical consideration of the study were addressed.

Research Design

This research study employed a qualitative methodology, more specifically the phenomenological method to investigate the role of multicultural centers (MC) in supporting Black males with academic and social collegiate challenges at PWIs. This study involved an exploration of the various social and academic challenges faced by Black men at PWIs and how MCs influence action towards resilience, ultimately resulting in graduation from college. Due to the nature of the study, a qualitative approach was perceived to be the appropriate methodology. As a study exploring the naturalistic school setting and “lived experiences” of Black male college students, hearing their stories of achievement while engaging in MC programs is befitting. Furthermore, the phenomenological method greatly enhances the researcher’s ability to investigate the ‘phenomenon’ of the use of the MCs to help Black men transcend their social and academic challenges at PWIs.

One of the major attributes of the qualitative research approach is that there is a focus on the relationship between the researcher and the participant, in addition to the constraints that shape the inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Fundamentally, qualitative research is

premised on the value-laden nature of the inquiry. That is the assumptions adopted are shaped by the approach that the researcher chooses. Accordingly, the selection of the qualitative approach situates the researcher in an optimal position to seek out answers to questions that focus on the modalities through which social experience is developed and assigned meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The phenomenological approach is the method used in this qualitative study. Phenomenology is primarily used to shed light on specific ideas, to identify phenomena especially through the eyes of the individuals involved in a particular event or situation (Creswell, 2014; Privitera, 2013). This denotes the gathering of ‘deep’ information and perception by use of qualitative modalities, such as interviews, and then delineating the findings from the research participants’ point of view (Creswell, 2014; Groenwald, 2004). The operative word in phenomenological research is ‘describe.’ Therefore, in the using the phenomenological approach, the researcher aims to describe as precisely and accurately as possible while remaining true to the facts as presented by the participants (Creswell, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The advantage of the phenomenological method is its usefulness to clarifying the essences of the experiences and perceptions of individuals and challenging structural or normative assumptions (Creswell, 2014; Privitera, 2013).

The specific phenomenological approach that underpinned this research is the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). In this regard, it influenced every facet of the research including shaping the type of questions that are asked, the form of data collection, and the steps involved in the data analysis. The researcher chose IPA to prompt the participants to retell and attribute meaning to their experiences about the importance of MCs for helping Black students to overcome the social and academic challenges experienced at a PWI.

According to Smith and Osborn (2007):

The aim of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is to explore in detail how participants are making sense of their personal and social world, and the main currency for an IPA study is the meaning particular experiences, events, states hold for participants. The approach is phenomenological in that it involves a detailed examination of the participant's lifeworld; it attempts to explore personal experience and is concerned with an individual's personal perception or account of an object or event, as opposed to an attempt to produce an objective statement of the object or event itself. (p. 53)

IPA is well suited as a tool to examine the stories of the participants. Central to IPA is the argument that the research process is dynamic and therefore enables the researcher to have an active role. The researcher is attempting to gain access to the participant's personal world but is unable to do this in its entirety. This is because access is dependent on and is complicated by the researcher's own perceptions, with the attendant reality that these perceptions are necessary in order to denote meaning from that other personal world through the process of interpretation, ultimately a two-stage interpretation or double hermeneutic results. Participants are trying to make sense of their world while the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants' attempts to make sense of their world (Smith & Osborn, 2007). The result is that the perspective of the researcher is integral even as he seeks to garner and make sense of the responses by the participants. Therefore, the researcher chose this method as it emphasizes and makes provision for the crucial role of both the participant and the researcher in the research process.

IPA is arguably among the most popularly used strain of phenomenology. The main premise of IPA is that it strives to give insight into how an individual in a specific context makes sense of a given phenomenon (Hanley, Lennie & Williams, 2012; Tuohy et al., 2013). Consequently, the phenomenological premise enabled the researcher to pursue a credible and

thorough investigation. In contrast, phenomenologists are of the view that the researcher cannot be detached from his or her own presuppositions and should not pretend otherwise (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). In this regard, this researcher gathered data, analyzed the data, and subsequently assigned meaning regarding the perspectives of research participants (Black male college seniors) about the phenomenon of the role of multicultural centers in supporting Black men to navigate academic and social collegiate challenges at PWIs.

Problem Statement

Although there is extensive research about the matriculation of Black men in college, very little has been said about the use of MCs as tools to help recruitment, retention, and graduation efforts of Black men in higher education. Recent research on the Black male student experience in higher education has focused mostly on overall retention and persistence issues (Von Robertson & Chaney, 2017; Harper, Berhanu, Davis & McGuire, 2015; Harper, 2012; National Center for Education Research, 2011). This argument is substantiated by the following statistics. Black students account for 12 % of college students in the United States (Strayhorn 2014) and approximately 85% of these students attend PWIs (Hoston, Graves & Fleming-Randle 2010; Strayhorn 2014). In 2010, 1,341,354 Black men were enrolled in postsecondary institutions, yet only 33.9% of the 2003 cohort of Black men in four-year institutions had graduated in six years (National Center for Education Research, 2011). By contrast, 58.2% of white men from the 2003 cohort completed their studies within the same six-year period (National Center for Education Research, 2011). Furthermore, there is an expansive gap between the length of time it takes to complete college for Blacks and Whites at PWIs (Harper, Berhanu, Davis & McGuire, 2015). Data released from the U.S. Department of Education in 2012 revealed that the graduation rate of Black males was an abysmal 39%, showing an achievement gap of over 20 percentage points when compared to

the rate for White male students (Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 2013). This reality is even more startling when one considers that Black male college completion rates are the lowest among both sexes and all racial/ethnic groups in U.S. higher education (Harper, 2012; National Center for Education Statistics, 2012; Strayhorn, 2008). Finally, since black males have the highest attrition rate of any college demographic, the challenges experienced by black male students can prove detrimental to their academic success (Von Robertson & Chaney, 2017).

Therefore, creating a designated space on college campuses where Black men can make meaningful connections with both faculty and other students will not only aid in increasing the chances of graduation but can also make the collegiate experience more enjoyable. The use of MCs to help Black students transition to college and the strategies or approaches to minimize the constant social and academic struggle of Black male students at PWIs has not been the focus of earlier studies. Consequently, this study aimed to explore how educational institutions can utilize the centers to assist in Black students' increased satisfaction, motivation, engagement, and involvement. In addition, the researcher intended for the findings of the study to make contributions towards the improvement and optimization of the college experience for Black males at PWIs.

Throughout the researcher's academic career at a PWI, there was a lack of mechanisms at the institution that catered to the need for an engaging and fulfilling academic experience, for himself and the other handful of Black students. At that crucial juncture in his life, the ultimate goal for the researcher was not only to be successful but also to acquire relevant exposure and meaningful experiences that would allow him to make seminal contributions to higher education specifically as it concerned the success of Black men. As a Black student at a PWI, the researcher had the first-hand experience with the various issues

and challenges that often negatively affected the recruitment, retention and ultimately the graduation of Black men.

Research Questions

The research questions that will drive this study are:

1. How do Black men navigate academic and social collegiate challenges at a predominately White institution (PWI)?
2. How does a multicultural center assist Black men at a predominately White institution (PWI) to overcome social and academic challenges?

Sample

Participants

The sample from the overall population of Black college seniors was selected according to the principles of purposive sampling consistent with the purposes of this research (Babbie, 2010; Zohrabi, 2013). Purposive sampling is the selection of participants who “have had experiences relating to the phenomenon to be researched” (Groenewald, 2004, p. 9). The researcher recruited seven participants for the interviews, and subsequently, four of these participants were invited to participate in the focus group discussion. The PWI that was used in the study is a premier flagship state university in the South. Participants were selected by a non-random sampling technique; the sample population was conveniently selected because of their knowledge of the subject area, their availability and their willingness to participate. The researcher also employed snowball sampling to increase the number of participants, as initial participants were asked to recommend other participants for the interviews and focus group discussion.

Recruitment

For this study, seven participants were recruited for interviews and based on the interviews four participants were selected for the focus group discussion. Due to the likelihood that participants might not be available on the day of the interviews, the researcher over-recruited by at least 20% of the total number of participants required (Morgan, 1997; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). To be eligible for participation in the study, the participants had to meet the following criteria: self-identify as Black, be a U.S. citizen or U.S. Permanent Resident and be at least 18 years old. Participants should also be currently matriculating full-time seniors at the PWI. Transferred participants must have matriculated at current institution for more than one (1) semester and have accessed and used the services of the Multicultural Center at the PWI. The participants were recruited from the selected PWI through the use of a flyer, social media, email, and student organizations and through the use of the snowball sampling technique. See Appendix D for inclusion criteria and Appendix C for recruitment materials.

Instrumentation

Informed consent governed this research. Following their agreement to participate in the interview or focus group, the participants were given informed consent documents to review and sign before participating (Appendix E & F). Each participant received a copy of his signed informed consent. An interview protocol was designed for use with each of the seven selected participants for the study and, consisted of ten questions (Appendix B). The researcher used a similar focus group instrument which also consisted of 10 questions (Appendix F).

Focus Group

Researchers conceptualize focus groups as a pivotal tool to conduct data collection from various individuals simultaneously (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). Furthermore, focus groups are an economical, fast, and efficient method for obtaining data from multiple participants

(thereby potentially increasing the overall number of participants in a given qualitative study). In addition, the interactions that occur among the participants may yield important data, create the possibility for more spontaneous responses, and may even provide a setting where the participants can discuss personal problems and provide possible solutions (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). The focus group protocol consisted of 10 questions (Appendix A) and was used to collect information from a group of four Black male students at a PWI.

The questions in the focus group protocol attempted to elicit responses from Black men at a PWI regarding their experience with the use of the MC. The questions in the interview protocol focused on the reasons they chose to attend a PWI, the type of challenges that they have encountered while enrolled in college, how their challenges have affected their social and academic experiences, the ways in which they have used the MC to cope, the importance of the MC to their social and academic functioning and the ways in which the capacity of the MC could be enhanced to support Black men in college. The focus group discussion was audio- recorded and then transcribed. Following the focus group discussion, the respondents were given a transcript for verification purposes within a week.

Interviews

Interviews are conducted to gather information from persons who are knowledgeable about the topic under study. According to Hoyle, Harris, & Judd (2002), the questions that encompass the interview protocol ought to elicit vivid and detailed responses from the respondents. The interview protocol (Appendix B) was used as a guide to facilitate semi-structured interviews and obtain data from the participants. Semi-structured interviews are non-standardized; the order of the questions can be changed depending on the direction of the interview (Corbetta, 2003). The primary rationale for using the semi-structured interview is to provide the researcher with the flexibility to ask additional questions, especially ones that may not have been anticipated at the beginning of the interview. Furthermore, this type of

interview enables the researcher to investigate the views and opinions of the interviewee (Corbetta, 2003).

The interview protocol was used to gain information from Black men at a PWI regarding their experience with the use of the MC. The questions in the interview protocol focused on the reasons they chose to attend a PWI, the type of challenges that they have encountered while enrolled in college, how their challenges have affected their social and academic reality, the ways in which they have used the MC to cope, the importance of the MC to their social and academic functioning and the ways in which the capacity of the MC could be enhanced to support Black men in college. The response given by the participants was audio-recorded. Following the interview, the respondents were given a transcript to verify within a week.

Potential Researcher Bias

The researcher is a Black male who pursued undergraduate and graduate degrees at PWIs. Therefore, in the creation and development of the interview protocol, he could use his experiences to inform question choice and structure. In the administering of the protocol to the interview or focus group participants, his experience could influence the way in which the questions are presented. Also, the fact that the researcher is a senior administrator in an institution of higher learning may influence how the experiences and challenges articulated by the participants are interpreted.

To manage these biases, the researcher created a standardized checklist of questions for himself that was consulted before each interview. Also, he used peer review to limit biased and leading questions in the interview and focus group instruments. Furthermore, he identified a colleague who reviewed his remarks, descriptions, and interpretation after the interview and a focus group discussion with participants.

Data Collection

Following approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the data collection was conducted. The letter of cooperation from the PWI formed a part of the IRB packet (See Appendix G). The researcher then finalized the participants from the PWI. Initial contact was made with participants who meet the criteria by phone to seek their agreement for the focus group and interviews. Subsequent to their agreement and declaration of informed consent, participants were asked questions regarding socio-economic background, major, age, whether first-generation and level of college preparation (See Table 1).

Table 1

<i>Demographic Profile Matrix for Participants</i>						
Participant Code Name	Age	GPA	Socio- Economic Background	First- generation	Major	Level of college preparation

Focus Group

Following the receipt of an affirmative response, the researcher proceeded to arrange a mutually convenient date, time, and place for conducting the focus group discussion. Traditionally, focus group research is “a way of collecting qualitative data, which—essentially—involves engaging a small number of people in an informal group discussion (or discussions), ‘focused’ around a particular topic or set of issues” (Wilkinson, 2004, p. 177). According to Onwuegbuzie et al. (2009), social science researchers and qualitative researchers in particular often rely on focus groups to collect data from multiple individuals simultaneously. Focus groups are advantageous as they are seen as less threatening to many research participants, and this environment is helpful for participants to discuss perceptions, ideas, opinions, and thoughts (Krueger & Casey, 2000). According to Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2005),

Two dimensions of Lazarsfeld and Merton's research efforts constitute part of the legacy of using focus groups within qualitative research: (a) capturing people's responses in real space and time in the context of face-to-face interactions and (b) strategically 'focusing' interview prompts based on themes that are generated in these face-to-face interactions and that are considered particularly important to the researchers. (p. 899)

Additional benefits from using focus groups are that they are an economical, fast, and efficient method for obtaining data from multiple participants (Krueger & Casey, 2000; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009), thereby potentially increasing the overall number of participants in a given qualitative study (Krueger, 2000). In addition, the focus groups environment is socially oriented (Krueger, 2000) and the sense of belonging to a group can increase the participants' sense of cohesiveness (Peters, 1993) and help them to feel safe to share information (Vaughn, Schumm, & Sinagub, 1996; Onwuegbuzie, 2009). Furthermore, the interactions that occur among the participants can yield important data (Morgan, 1988), can create the possibility for more spontaneous responses, and can provide a setting where the participants can discuss personal problems and provide possible solutions (Duggleby, 2005; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009).

The focus groups questions (Appendix A) were constructed based on the research question and research design of this study. The focus group consisted of four participants and lasted under 90 minutes (Morgan, 1997; Vaughn et al., 1996) (Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Krueger, 1988, 1994, 2000). The researcher acted as the moderator and took notes. In this regard, he was responsible for facilitating the discussion, prompting members to speak, requesting overly talkative members to let others talk, and encouraging all the members to participate.

Before the start of the focus group discussion, the researcher gave a brief summary of the outline of the study including the rationale for the study and the intended outcomes. Subsequently, the concept of informed consent was explained to the participant after which they were invited to sign a consent form, (see Appendix E) of which they were given a copy. Subsequently, the participants were asked to respond to questions from a protocol (See Appendix A). Their responses were recorded. At the end of the focus group discussion, the researcher emphasized his commitment to submitting a transcript of the interview for the verification of the participants.

Interviews

Subsequent to the receipt of an affirmative response to an invitation to participate in the interview, the researcher proceeded to arrange a mutually convenient date, time, and place for conducting the interviews. Prior to the start of each interview, the researcher invited the participants to sign a consent form (Appendix F), and they were then given a copy. The participants were asked questions from a protocol (Appendix B) and the responses recorded. Following the completion of each interview, the researcher submitted a transcript of the interview for the verification of the participants.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is a way of transforming data through interpretation (Groenwald, 2004). Following the transcription of the responses given by the participants from the interviews and focus group, the researcher conducted the data analysis. The data analysis was done in the following order: an initial read-through of the transcripts, an in-depth perusal of the transcripts, application of pre-set coding scheme, a reread the transcripts based on research questions, a reread the transcripts for emergent topics, and, the clustering of pre-set and emergent topics according to research questions. The purpose of the initial read through was to acquire a quick understanding of the respondents' description of their experiences.

Subsequent to this, the researcher performed an in-depth perusal of the transcripts and coded the data through the use of a priori or pre-set coding (Stuckey, 2015). A priori coding makes the data analysis more manageable and systematic; in addition, it also provides a good basis for additional topics to emerge. The researcher employed a pre-structured category system for the data collected by closely aligning the chosen topics to the interview questions. That is, the interview questions were used as a guide to developing key topics for structuring and analyzing the information given by the participants. The topics that were covered include: factors that influenced the decision to enroll at the PWI, major academic and social challenges that they experience as a Black male at a PWI, coping strategies used to deal with social and academic challenges at PWI, particular services of the MC that were accessed, whether the use of services offered by the MC helped the navigation of social challenges at PWI and whether the use of services offered by the MC helped the navigation of academic challenges at PWI.

After doing this, the researcher reviewed the responses of all participants according to a specific research question. The thematic organizational framework for the data analysis was in keeping with the questions on the interview and focus group protocols. In this regard, the responses of the interview and focus group participants were deconstructed and organized based on these initial topics. Notwithstanding, emergent themes were identified from the process of re-reading the transcripts. All the themes (original and emergent) were clustered according to the topic and moreover, the research questions.

The responses were organized based on the thematic affiliation and then compared among the different respondents. In addition, the responses were interpreted through the lenses of a theoretical framework which includes: Tinto's Model of Integration, Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory and Social Cognitive Theory.

Furthermore, the response given by the participants were interpreted through the overarching conceptual framework for the study (See Appendix H). There was also a comparison of the topics and the details surrounding the popularity of topics between the results of the interview and the focus group. A narrative report organized according to the research questions was prepared to reflect the outcome of the analysis.

Validity and Reliability

Validity essentially is concerned with whether or not a research inquiry is believable and true, and if it evaluates what it is supposed to evaluate (Zohrabi, 2013). Burns (1999) stressed that “validity is an essential criterion for evaluating the quality and acceptability of research” (p. 256). Accordingly, the researcher was guided by Patton’s (2002) three principles to improve content validity: (a) use a broad sample of content rather than a narrow one, (b) emphasize important material, and (c) write questions to measure the appropriate issues, when developing the assessment item. Internal validity was further exhibited through the description of the interview and focus group discussions (Maxwell, 2005).

The method by which data was collected and analyzed contributed to validity. The validity of the instrument was also enhanced by member checks, peer examination and mitigation of researcher bias. Member checks describe the process whereby participants check their responses and interpretation of data for confirmation and validation. Consequently, the results and interpretation of the interview / focus group were presented for confirmation to the interview /focus group participants in order to ensure that the content described was consistent with the views they articulated. The aforementioned enabled the plausibility and truthfulness of the information to be determined (Zohrabi, 2013). Peer evaluation denotes the procedure that facilitates the review and comment on the data and findings by various non-participants in the field. A proviso is that the peers need to be familiar with the topic under study and possess adequate background information. Therefore,

the researcher asked three content experts to review the focus group and interview protocols. The interpretation by these peers served to augment the plausibility of the data analysis and interpretation thereby enhancing validity (Zohrabi, 2013). Inevitably, each researcher has his or her own set of biases. Accordingly, throughout the execution of the research, the researcher took the requisite steps to ensure that the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data are completed with limited bias as much as possible. In addition, the researcher acted in a transparent and non-judgmental manner for the entire process and rigidly adhered to ethical principles and norms. Moreover, the presentation of the findings was reported in an accurate and honest manner.

Nunan (1999) noted that reliability is concerned with the consistency, dependability, and replicability of the findings garnered from a research effort. The researcher employed peer evaluation for reliability, where expert persons or peers with knowledge regarding the subject area were asked to review and subsequently comment on the protocols, in order to ensure that the study could be replicated (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

In addition to the aforementioned, even in the face of dissent, the criteria and affiliated techniques for establishing trustworthiness advanced by Lincoln and Guba (1985) have gained a seminal status in the academic community. Consequently, the techniques to be used for the criteria of credibility (internal validity) are prolonged engagement, peer evaluation, and member checks. Description was used to establish transferability (external validity) while the examination of data, which encompassed collection, storage, and accuracy was used to ensure reliability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Limitations, Delimitations, and Assumptions

The sample was recruited using purposive sampling. Also, the study was conducted in natural settings and may not be easy to replicate. The delimitations of the study were that it

only focused on Black men who are in their senior year at a PWI. Consequently, the study did not capture the experiences of freshmen, sophomores, and juniors.

Among the assumptions made in this study, are that participants may have only attended one PWI. Also, the assumption was made that participants that have a bi-racial or multi-racial ethnic heritage that includes African ethnicity will identify as Black. Finally, it is was assumed that the participants would provide honest answers to the questions asked in the interviews and focus group discussion.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical consideration was maintained in this research by an adherence to the principles of self-determination, anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013; Creswell, 2014). In keeping with the principle of self-determination, the participants were given the option to voluntarily decide whether to participate (or not) after being given adequate information about the study. To protect their anonymity, the names of the participants did not appear in the presentation of the findings. Therefore, the participants were assigned pseudonyms. To maintain confidentiality, the data collected was kept private and stored under password protection. The researcher explained informed consent to the participants, after which they were given an informed consent form to sign (see Appendix C). Subsequently, all participants received a copy of their signed consent form.

Presentation of Findings

The narrative report of the findings and the related conclusions were organized according to the two main research questions. The interview and focus group questions (the main topics and sub-topics) were clustered according to their related research question. Finally, the responses to a particular topic were grouped and then reported under the affiliated thematic sub-heading. Emergent themes were also placed under the relevant thematic sub-

heading. Finally, the report contained the results from the findings and a discussion of the recommendations. Considering that, this is a qualitative study, the report was greatly enhanced by rich descriptions in the form of verbatim quotes.

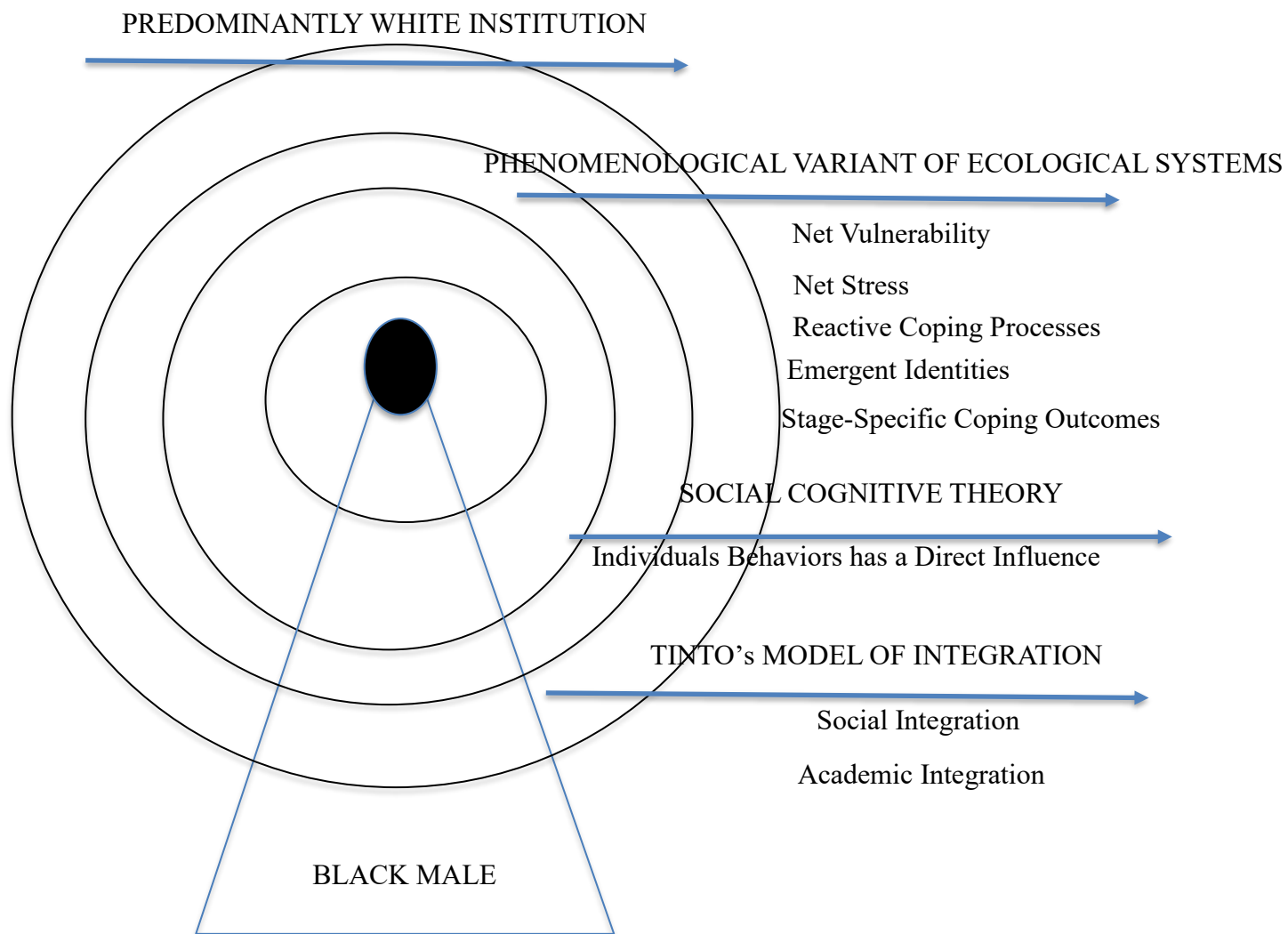


Figure 1. Black Male Lens: Chart depicting the life at a PWI through the lens of the Black male using key elements of PVEST theory, Social Cognitive Theory and Tinto's Model of Integration.

Figure 1 depicts the experience at the PWI through the lens of the Black male using the theories that encompass the theoretical framework. These theories include PVEST, Social Cognitive Theory and Tinto's Model of Integration. Black male students must successfully and resourcefully negotiate and navigate their higher education community while working toward their degree completion. Black male students recognize these frameworks as being the lens in which their experiences will be shaped during their time attending a PWI. The view in which the landscape of a PWI is seen through the lens of a Black male student.

Chapter Summary

This chapter describes the methodology and research design of the study. The study was underpinned by the qualitative approach. In addition, the chapter explored the reasons that phenomenology and more specifically Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was the best method for this study. The criteria for selecting participants were also described. The basis upon which the interview and focus group protocols were developed formed part of this chapter, in addition to the steps that were taken to ensure informed consent and ethical consideration. The approach that was used to collect data was also outlined. Finally, there was also a focus on the ways in which the data were analyzed and presented.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presents the results from one-on-one interviews and a focus group discussion conducted with Black male seniors who attended a predominantly White institution (PWI) and accessed the Multicultural center (MC). A focus group discussion was held with four (4) Black male seniors, and one-on-one interviews were held with seven (7) participants. The interviews included the four focus group participants to get their perspective on the MCs' role in Black male success at a PWI. The seven participants were given pseudonyms. All participants met the inclusion criteria (Appendix D). The focus group discussion and interviews were conducted with Black male seniors who attended the PWI with the aim of finding answers to the following research questions:

- **Research Question 1.** How do Black men navigate academic and social collegiate challenges at a predominately White institution (PWI)?
- **Research Question 2.** How does a multicultural center assist Black men at a predominately White institution (PWI) to overcome social and academic challenges?

The interviews and focus group were audiotaped and then transcribed in Microsoft Word. In keeping with the research agreement, the transcripts of the one-on-one-interviews and focus group discussion were presented to the interviewees for their verification and member-checking. The researcher coded the transcription data through the use of a priori or present coding, by closely aligning the chosen topics to the interview and focus group questions. That is, the interview and focus group questions were used as a guide for structuring and analyzing the responses given by the Black male seniors who participated in the study.

Topics were classified according to their affiliated research questions, and emergent themes were coded under each topic. The researcher used a systematic technique of

examining the transcripts according to the topics to identify the responses from the participants that were connected to the various topics. Accordingly, the researcher sorted all the responses connected to a topic. In the initial read-through, all responses were paired with an associated category. While conducting the second reading, the researcher extracted responses that were similar in nature, while noting the number and different responses. Additional readings were then performed until all the similar responses were isolated and then collected from a specific question. The researcher repeated this process until all the similar responses were isolated and grouped while the dissimilar responses were noted.

Topics were grouped according to similarity and were classified in keeping with the broader research questions (See Table 2). Therefore, all the data that corresponded to the various topics were gathered. The results from the interviews with Black male seniors regarding the Multicultural Center's role in Black male success at a PWI are included.

Table 2

Link between Theories, Research Questions and Topics

Research Questions	Theories	Topics
How do Black men navigate academic and social collegiate challenges at a predominately White institution (PWI)?	1. Tinto's Model of Integration 2. PVEST 3. Social Cognitive Theory	1. Academic Challenges Experienced
		2. Social Challenges Experienced
		3. Coping Strategies used to deal with Academic Challenges Experienced
		4. Coping Strategies used to deal with Social Challenges Experienced
How does a multicultural center assist Black men at a predominately White institution (PWI) to overcome social and academic challenges?	1. Tinto's Model of Integration 2. PVEST 3. Social Cognitive Theory	1. Utilized Programs and Services of the MC
		2. Ways that the services Offered by the MC helped Navigate Academic Challenges Experienced at PWI
		3. Ways that the services Offered by the MC helped Navigate Social Challenges Experienced at PWI
		4. Advice for the MC to help Black Males Attend PWI
		5. Overall Experience of PWI in terms of the MC

Demographic and Background Data**Demographic Data of Study Participants**

All seven participants were 21 years old, and they had a GPA from 3.0 to 3.4. Jim and Jamall had the highest GPA at 3.4, followed by James with a GPA of 3.3, Mike with a GPA. of 3.2, Richard with a GPA. of 3.1 and, finally Jeff and Jordan both with a GPA of 3.1. Five of the seven participants were from a middle-class socioeconomic status (SES), while two were from a low SES. James, Jim, Jamall, Mike, and Jeff self-identified as middle class while Jordan and Richard identified as being from a lower class. Three participants were first-generation college students; they were Jeff, Jordan, and Richard. Jim and Richard had a sports-related major, while James, Jamall, Mike, Jeff, and Jordan had the respective majors of

Psychology, Communication, Construction Management, Interior Design, and Education.

Only James indicated that his level of college preparation was good, Jim, Jamall, Mike, and Jeff reported that their level of college preparation was average. Jordan and Richard indicated that their level of the college of preparation was low (See Table 3).

Table 3

<i>Demographic Data of Study Participants</i>						
Participant Pseudonym	Age	GPA	Socio-Economic Background	First Generation College Student	Major	Level of College Preparation
James	21	3.3	Middle Class	No	Psychology	Good
Jim	21	3.4	Middle Class	No	Sports Administration	Average
Jamall	21	3.4	Middle Class	No	Communication	Average
Mike	21	3.2	Middle Class	No	Construction Management	Average
Jeff	21	3.0	Middle Class	Yes	Interior Design	Average
Jordan	21	3.0	Working Class	Yes	Education	Low
Richard	21	3.1	Working Class	Yes	Sports and Fitness	Low

Subsequent to, the presentation of the Demographic data, the first set of topics from the findings will focus on the background data of participants.

Background Data

Topic1: Factors that Influenced Enrollment at PWI

The thematic responses elicited for this topic by the participants included: *Friends*, *Family*, *Financial Assistance*, *Proximity to Home*, and *Sports*. The six aforementioned responses were indicated by two of the seven participants in each case for the interviews. According to James, “my family supported me and stuff,” and Richard outlined that, “the decision to attend was because my family lived and breathed the brand, the school, they were big fans.” In addition, James stated that his high school played a major role in influencing him to attend the PWI. James said that “Definitely high school helped facilitate my transition

from high school to college.” Mike, Jeff, and James also indicated that friends influenced their decision to attend the PWI. In the words of Jeff, “I had students that were older than me that I was friends with, and I shared experiences with them outside of high school and continued to grow our friendship outside of high school [while they were in college].” Mike indicated that “What really influenced me to go was playing football, and all my close friends were pretty much going.” For the interviews, both Jamall and Mike gave an answer that was related to sports. Jamall stated that “They had a sports team” and Mike indicated “playing football.”

Financial Assistance was one of the keys themes that were identified as being a deciding factor for attendance at the PWI. Jim responded that he was influenced to attend the PWI because he was enrolled in a program that paid his tuition if stayed in the state and attended college. Jim articulated that, “I knew I wanted to study in the state because like TOPS, it pays your tuition if you stay inside of state and get a GPA of 2.5.” (TOPS is the Tuition Opportunity Program for Students that provides high school graduates meeting specific eligibility requirements with a scholarship if they choose to attend a public college or university). Jordan delineated, “partial scholarship was the defining factor.” In the interview, Jordan delineated, “partial scholarship was the defining factor.” Whereas, in the focus group discussion James, Jim and Mike all indicated that financial reasons were a factor that influenced their decision to attend the PWI. James advanced, “What influenced my decision to come definitely had to do with financial reasons.” In answering Jim said, “Just what James said financial reasons were probably the biggest factor in choosing a university.” In addition, Jim outlined that his decision to attend was also influenced by the fact that he was in a tuition program. Jim expressed the perspective that, “and TOPS it was just basically the tuition program that kinda helps pay for school. They kinda covered all my tuition expenses.” None of the seven (7) participants in the study indicated that they were recruited by the PWI.

Three participants indicated that the desire to stay close to home influenced their decision to go to the PWI. According to James, “You know I am saying that it was all about in state ... and I wanted to go to school with my friends.” In the words of Jim, “Also did not want to go too far from home at the time.” Jamall indicated that “One thing for me was definitely not wanting to go too far away from home. I felt like I was not mature enough to go far away from home.” Mike expressed the view that “staying close to home.”

The responses related to this topic were wide-ranging and included *the desire to stay close to friends, the desire to stay close to home, financial reasons and an interest in sports*. Furthermore, the frequency was similar for each response in the case of the interviews as two persons each gave answers consistent with the identified responses.

Table 4

Factors that Influenced Enrollment, n=7

	Number of Participants who cited this Response	Percentage of Participants who cited this Response
Financial Assistance	4	57
Proximity to Home	3	43
Family	2	29
Friends	2	29

Topic 2: Overall Experience as a Black Male at PWI

Interview Data. The responses expressed in relation to this topic were both negative and positive. They included *Overwhelming Experience; A Black Male is not the same as a White Male, Hard to answer that Question, Pride and Lack of Belonging*. It is noteworthy that two

participants indicated that they felt a sense of pride. According to Jordan, the PWI was a different world. In his own words, Jordan said, “it’s been an overwhelming experience, sheltered from my community into a totally different universe.” Mike made mention of the fact that “Being a Black male is not the same as being a White male... you are not given the same opportunity. Like they are not there for you.” Jamall stated that he found it very hard to answer that question. In the words of Jamall, “That is a hard question to answer for me... I have the pride to say that I graduated from college... I never felt like it was my homeschool. I never felt like they wanted me to be here.” Jim said:

I do feel a sense of pride; you don’t see that as often as you should. You know people being in gangs and stuff like that. It is definitely a positive outlook to see a Black Man walk across that stage. It is definitely something I am proud of as not many people can say that and definitely doing it at a PWI.

The answers given by the participants covered areas such as *Overwhelming Experience*, *A Black Male is not the same as a White Male*, *Hard to answer that Question*, *Pride and Lack of Belonging*.

Focus Group Data. The two main responses outlined in the focus group discussion pertaining to the topic of *Overall Experience as a Black Male at PWI were Having No Regrets*, and *PWI is a Reflection of the Real World*. All of the participants in the focus group discussion indicated that they have no regrets about attending the PWI. Furthermore, three of the participants James, Jim, and Mike said that the experience is a reflection of the real world. According to James, “I wouldn’t say that I regret going because it definitely opened my eyes to a lot of the harsher realities of the world... it definitely taught me a lot.” Jim said that “I definitely would not regret going to, but it is just a preview of the real world.” Mike said, “I

have no regrets attending but I mean it is a real-world example.” In the words of Jamall, “I am not gonna say definitely, but I have no regrets.”

Having No Regrets and *Reflection of the Real World* were the two major topics given by the participants. It was noteworthy that *Having No Regrets* was indicated by all of the participants in the focus group discussion.

Table 5

Overall Experience as a Black Male at PWI, n=7

	Number of Participants who cited this Response	Percentage of Participants who cited this Response
No Regrets	4	57
Reflection of the Real World	3	43
Pride	2	29
Lack of Belonging	1	14
Overwhelming Experience	1	14
A Black Male is not the same as White Male	1	14
Hard to Answer that Question	1	14

Research Question 1: How do Black men navigate academic and social collegiate challenges at a predominately White institution (PWI)?

From the findings, four major topics and one minor topic were incorporated under Research Question one. The four major topics include *Academic Challenges Experienced as a Black Male at PWI*, *Social Challenges Experienced as a Black Male at PWI*; *Coping Strategies used to deal with Academic Challenges Experienced at PWI*, and *Coping Strategies used to deal with Social Challenges Experienced at PWI*.

Topic 1: Academic Challenges Experienced as a Black Male at PWI

Interview Data. The academic challenges that were delineated encompass *Inadequate Pre-college Preparation*; *White people have Resources not Available to us*, *Lack of Faculty from the Black Ethnic group* and *Failure*. Two of the participants indicated that the academic challenge that they experienced was that *White people had resources that they did not have* or even have access to. This viewpoint was articulated by James and Jim. According to James, “You know not having the resources available to you that White students had.” Additionally, Jim advanced that, “White people have more. They have resources that they don’t necessarily share with other people like study guides.” Both Jamall and Mike delineated that they had experienced failure in their academic career. In the words of Jamall, “...and I did not want to stretch myself... I did not know that I could reach my limit until I failed.” Mike expressed that, “Academically, I was struggling, I had like maybe Ds in almost everything.” Both Jeff and Richard expressed that an academic challenge they experienced was not having people who look like them in the ranks of faculty. Jeff articulated that, “to go to a classroom and not to see a representation like faculty members.” Richard outlined that, “I think not having any professors that look like me ... We don’t have many African-American professors on campus.” The academic challenges that were experienced by Jordan were inadequate pre-college preparation. According to Jordan, “Some things were not

covered back home... it's just experiencing things and questions about areas I had had no formal training in my educational process prior to coming in."

The answers given by the participants in relation to this topic showcased the various academic challenges that they experienced at the PWI. The answers given by participants can be classified into localized factors and wider external factors such as *Inadequate Pre-college Preparation*, *White people have Resources not Available to us*, *Lack of Faculty from the Black Ethnic group* and *Failure*.

Focus Group Data. The academic challenges that were outlined in the focus group discussion were the *lack of mentorship* and *very few or no Black faculty at the PWI*. All of the participants in the focus group made mention of the lack of Black professors. Jamall said that "I definitely think I have experienced a lack of mentorship... I think that if I would have had a mentor that I was able to meet somebody like me that I could look up to other things would have been able to help me academically." To go further, Jamall articulated that the lack of Black professors prevented him from seeking help because often times he was afraid of approaching someone who did not look like him. Moreover, James said that "It's my 4th year here and I have not had a Black professor my entire time.... Sitting in a class with mostly White people, White teachers. You just don't feel like included." Jim articulated that, "I am going off of what James said, I have never had a Black professor in my history of being here. It would definitely help to have somebody that looks like you from a professor standpoint to assist you or just to make you feel like you would want to reach out to them." In the words of Mike, "I have not had any Black professors in my college career. I major in construction management, and my entire class is nothing but white people. My professors are all White male, and I don't feel comfortable going into professors and that's unfortunate." The academic challenges identified by the respondents in the focus group discussion included

Lack of Mentorship and *Very few or no Black Faculty at PWI*. Of these two identified challenges, *Very few or no Black faculty at PWI* was the major response.

Table 6

Academic Challenges Experienced as a Black Male at PWI, n=7

	Number of Participants who cited this Response	Percentage of Participants who cited this Response
Lack of Faculty from the Black Ethnic group	6	86
White people have Resources not Available to Us	2	29
Failure	2	29
Inadequate Pre-college Preparation	1	14
Lack of Mentorship	1	14

Topic 2: Social Challenges Experienced as a Black Male at PWI

Interview Data. The answers given by the participants can be classified into the areas of *Financial, Non-Inclusion, Stigma, People talking to you like you are Stupid and Not seeing Representation*. Five responses were consistent with the feeling of *Non-Inclusion*. Both James and Jim indicated that just by walking across the campus they felt a sense of hostility and non-inclusion. According to James, “walking down the hall and seeing people look at you crazy as for even the walking down the hall, and I did not do nothing to them.” Jim also said that in walking across the PWI he felt like it was their campus. As he pointed out, “I just feel like being at, you know a predominantly White campus; I always feel like walking on campus; it is their campus.” In addition, a standout social challenge experienced by Jim was the fact that he could not be initiated into White fraternities. Jim advanced, “we never had the opportunity to be advanced into White frats.” Jeff outlined that the social challenges for him were, “not being involved and not having space where I could share my identity. I think that was the biggest challenge for any minority, especially for a Black male.” In addition, Jordan articulated “I think sometimes it makes me and my peers feel that there is not a place for us on campus. We don’t see that person we can look up to.” James also spoke about being stigmatized, having people talk to you like you were stupid and the horror of seeing racial epithets written in the bathroom. In the words of James, “Just being stigmatized against, going into bathrooms and seeing f***** nigger written on the wall on the stalls like.” In this regard, Jim outlined that the social challenges that he experienced were, “not feeling a part, probably being watched more than other students probably because I am a Black student.”

The social challenge that was experienced by Jamall was, “not seeing representation.” In addition according to Mike, “Just walking on to the campus and noticing a whole bunch of white people basically and you are just sticking out. It’s just discouraging at that point to see something like that.” Jordan identified financial as the social challenge that he experienced as

he was not able to be a part of the community. According to Jordan, “lack of adequate income to function outside of just school ...lack of freedom to socialize, like sometimes just going out to the movies...”

A range of social challenges experienced by the participants as Black males at the PWI was identified. These social challenges comprised *Financial, Non-Inclusion, Stigma, People talking to you like you are Stupid* and *Not seeing Representation*. The most popular response was *Non-Inclusion* as it was indicated by four of seven participants.

Focus Group Data. The social challenges that were outlined in the focus group discussion were *Being in the Small Minority, Inability to access White Fraternities; White people have Resources not Available to us* and *the Non-Inclusive nature of the PWI*. James articulated that the biggest social challenge was that he was in such a small minority and the resulting consequence that he did not have similar opportunities as the majority. According to James, “it is difficult being a minority of such drastic margin at school. It is really like just different. I feel like I don’t have the same opportunities as other people.” When prompted by the interviewer in regard to the opportunities that are not available to Black males as a minority, James mentioned that there are only White fraternities and that the White students have resources such as test banks which were not available to Black students. According to James, “For instance, fraternities are a big thing, but there are really only White fraternities at ... I know a lot of students in the white frats that have test banks for example for tests and stuff.” In response to James, Jamall, added, “I know when we found out about the test bank, it was our freshman year.” Another social challenge that was brought to the fore by the participants was the view that the PWI was not inclusive. With the attendant reality that this non-inclusive nature forced them to interact with White students in order to get ahead. In the words of Jim, “Sometimes we often joke that you need to be friends with White people to get that advantage kinda. We kinda jokingly say it, but it is true.” In addition, according to Jamall,

“kinda force yourself to meet somebody who is a different race or different ethnicity or different beliefs just because it is what you have to do to get past and get by.”

The social challenges of *Being in the Small Minority*, *Inability to access White Fraternities*, *White people have Resources not Available to us*, and the *Non-Inclusive nature of the PWI* were identified in the focus group discussion and all seemed to be connected to each other, as exemplified by how the first response eventually led up to the final social challenge identified. *Non-Inclusion* was a response given in both the interviews and focus group discussion.

Table 7

Social Challenges Experienced as a Black Male at PWI, n=7

	Number of Participants who cited this Response	Percentage of Participants who cited this Response
Non-Inclusion	4	57
Stigma	2	29
Not Seeing Representation	2	29
Inability to Access White Fraternity	2	29
White People Have Resources Not Available to Us	2	29
Being in Small Minority	1	14
Financial	1	14
People talking to you like you are Stupid	1	14

Topic 3: Coping Strategies used to deal with Academic Challenges Experienced at PWI

Interview Data. Each of the seven participants gave a different response to this topic. These responses included *Seeking Academic Counseling*, *Seeking Tutoring*, *Running*, *Get involved in Clubs*, *Prayer*, *Persistence*, *Smoke and Drink*, and *Talk to Friends*. Richard indicated that he sought counseling and sought tutoring. According to Richard, “I think seeking [academic] counseling... you know to go get tutoring to cope with the academic challenges.” Jeff indicated that he runs and gets involved in clubs. Jeff stated, “So I run, I try to find clubs that I can be a voice in. I try to get involved as much as I can.” Mike indicated that he used prayer to cope with academic challenges. Jordan articulated that persistence was the means by which he dealt with his academic challenges. According to Jordan, “for me, it has just been persistence.” In order to cope with the academic challenges, Jim said that “It is just able to talk to someone as far as administration or faculty.” Whereas James expressed that his method of coping was talking to friends, screaming and crying. In order to cope with academic challenges Jamall also delineated that he talked with friends in order to cope with academic challenges, in addition to smoking and drinking.

The seven strategies identified by the participants for coping with the academic challenges at the PWI were wide-ranging. These seven strategies encompassed *Seeking Academic Counseling*, *Seeking Tutoring*, *Running*, *Get involved in Clubs*, *Prayer and Persistence*, *Smoke and Drink* and *Talk to Friends*.

Focus Group Data. All the participants in the focus group discussion indicated that talking to friends was a coping strategy that they used to deal with the academic challenges at the PWI. After being prompted by the interviewer regarding the coping strategy that they used the most, all the respondents indicated talking to friends. Jim said, “Friends and family just talking to them, just talking it out.” Jamall, articulated, “the same thing as Jim,” Jamall

said, “Just like they said” and Mike, “Exactly what they said.” There was outstanding inter-relatability among the focus groups participants as they were all congruent with the response of talking to friends. In addition following the words of the first participant, all the subsequent participants referenced each other.

Table 8

Coping Strategies used to deal with Academic Challenges Experienced at PWI, n=7

	Number of Participants who cited this Response	Percentage of Participants who cited this Response
Talk to Friends	4	57
Seeking Tutoring	1	14
Seeking Counseling	1	14
Getting involved in Clubs	1	14
Prayer Persistence	1	14
Smoke and Drink	1	14
Running	1	14
Scream and Cry	1	14

Topic 4: Coping Strategies used to deal with Social Challenges Experienced at PWI

Interview Data. The coping strategies used to deal with social challenges identified by the participants included *Talking to Family*, *Talking to Friends*, *Going to the MC*, *Prayer*, *Smoke and Drink*, and *Scream and Vent*. The responses of *Talking to Friends* and *Talking to Family* were highly recurrent. Three of the participants said that they talked to their family to cope with social challenges. These three participants included Mike, Jordan, and Richard. In the words of Mike, “talk to my family who is always there to support me they have gone through it as well.” Jordan articulated that, “my mother is a very spirited person who helped me because I was immature.” Richard delineated, “my upbringing, being family-oriented.” Another popular response concerning this topic was talking to friends. Four of the seven participants indicated that they talked to friends to cope with social challenges. These participants are James, Jim, Jamall, and Mike. In the words of James, “So too with that like all you can do is talk to your friends.” According to Jim, “just talking to people that look like me. I like to talk to my friends because they relate to me the most. I would not be comfortable talking to other people because they could not relate to what I am going through.” Jamall outlined that, “Sometimes I hang out with my friends to see what their issues are and talk about our problems.” Mike said that “talking to my friends who are going through the same things as me.”

In the focus group discussion, there was a significant recurrence of the response *Talking to Friends*. Each successive respondent made reference to the previous in articulating that talking to friends was a way in which they cope with the social challenges at the PWI. In the words of Jim, “But I think definitely talking to my Black friends makes me better as if I am not alone. It gives you comfort just to know that.” To follow up, Mike said, “To go off what Jim said definitely talking to friends and family is a good coping strategy as well as praying.” According to James, “I don’t really have nothing much to add to Jim and Mike. You got to

talk to other people you can relate to, and that is the easiest way to feel good about stuff.” In addition, Jamall articulated that, “I think that going off what they said is the biggest thing. The coping skill I singularly used for both the social issues and the academic issues is just being, make sure you are not alone.”

Of all the participants, Jeff was the only one who indicated that he went to the MC to cope with his social challenges. According to Jeff, “I think going to the MC has really helped.” James also indicated that screamed and vented in order to cope with the social challenges. Whereas, Jamall indicated that he smokes and drinks to cope with social challenges. Jordan also said that prayer was among the coping strategies that he used to deal with social challenges. In the words of Jordan, “I attempted to go back to what I was taught as a child, which was prayer, and then you that strengthened you to get out and get back in the game.” In the focus group discussion, Jordan also indicated that praying was also a way in which he coped with social challenges.

The Coping Strategies used to address the Social Challenges at the PWI as articulated by the participants comprised of *Talking to Family*, *Talking to Friends*, *Going to the MC*, *Prayer*, *Smoke and Drink*, and *Scream and Vent*. It is noteworthy that *Talking to Friends* and *Talking to Family* were the most popular responses.

Table 9

Coping Strategies used to deal with Social Challenges Experienced at PWI, n=7

	Number of Participants who cited this Response	Percentage of Participants who cited this Response
Talking to Friends	4	57
Talk to Family	3	43
Going to the MC	1	14
Prayer	1	14
Smoke and Drink	1	14
Scream and Cry	1	14

Research Question 1: How do Black men navigate academic and social collegiate challenges at a predominately White institution (PWI)? is a key premise for this research study. Seeing that it sets the foundation for the analysis and interpretation of Research Question 2 and ultimately the overall research topic. As evidenced by the four major topics that comprise Research Question one namely *Academic Challenges Experienced as a Black Male at PWI*, *Social Challenges Experienced as a Black Male at PWI*, *Coping Strategies used to deal with Academic Challenges Experienced at PWI*, and *Coping Strategies used to deal with Social Challenges Experienced at a PWI*. Furthermore, the deconstructed topics ensured that the research was addressed in sufficient detail to make significant contributions to the wider research topic.

Research Question 2: How does a multicultural center assist Black men at a predominately White institution (PWI) to overcome social and academic challenges?

Results for research question two can be described by the following topics *Utilized Programs and Services of the MCs, Ways that the services Offered by the MC helped Navigate Academic Challenges Experienced at PWI, Ways that the services Offered by the MC helped Navigate Social Challenges Experienced at PWI, Advice for the MC to help Black Males Attending PWI and Overall Experience at PWI in terms of the MC.*

Topic 1: Utilized Programs and Services of the MC

Interview Data. The responses articulated by the participants in relation to this topic included *Did not use much /Just to get Together, Diversity Ambassadors, Genesis Mentoring, Programs, National Building Coalition Institute (NCBI) Training and, Workshop and Speaker Series.* All the responses were indicated by one participant with the exception of the response of *Did not use much /Just to get Together* whereby two participants gave answers consistent with this response. This response deviated from all the other responses. Jordan indicated that he did not use the MC much. According to Jordan, “Regretfully I was not able to use the MC much. Primarily it was just the point of contact for some of us to get together.” In a similar vein, Mike outlined that he did not really use the services of the MC but just mostly went there to accompany friends. Mike articulated that, “I feel like I should have engaged in the Mentorship Program.” James indicated that he was a part of the Diversity Ambassadors. In the words of James, “Diversity Ambassadors was something that I did access through that office.” In the focus group discussion, James also indicated that he participated in Diversity Ambassadors. Jim articulated that he was a part of the Genesis Mentoring. According to Jim, “I was blessed to be a part of the Genesis Mentoring which was the program that the MC affairs put together.” In the focus group discussion, Jim also indicated that he used the Genesis Mentoring. Jamall indicated that he participated in the

NCBI training. In the words of Jamall, “The services that I took advantage of was the NCBI training.” A similar answer was given by Jamall in the focus group discussion. Jeff indicated that he accessed the Programs offered by the MC. According to Jeff, “I would say the programming that they put on.” Richard outlined that he accessed the Workshops and Speaker series. To quote Richard, “You know some workshops and several speaker series, listen to some lectures.” Each of the participants indicated that they utilized different services from the MC as all of the responses were indicated by only one participant except *Did not use much /Just to get Together* which was indicated by two participants.

Table 10

Utilized Programs and Services of the MC, n=7

	Number of Participants who cited this Response	Percentage of Participants who cited this Response
Did not use much /Just to get Together	2	29
Diversity Ambassadors	1	14
Genesis Mentoring Programs	1	14
NCBI Training	1	14
Workshop and Speaker Series	1	14

Topic 2: Ways that the services Offered by the MC helped Navigate Academic Challenges Experienced at PWI

Interview Data. The responses related to this topic included *Pivotal Role*, *Make Mature*, *Helped to Some Degree*, *Did not do a Whole Lot*, *Place of Shelter* and *Did not Play a Role*. Both Jeff and Richard were of the perspective that the MC played a pivotal role in helping them to make it to their senior year. According to Jeff, “I think if I did not have the center here, I think I might change my major. I would have dropped out in my sophomore year or junior year... If I did not have the resources that I have now or those resources that I gained my sophomore year or during my junior year, I don’t know where I would be.” In a similar way, Richard articulated that, “MC played a big role in making a guideline or map for me...that enabled me to get to a certain place in my academic career to where I am now.” Jordan said that the MC was a place of shelter. According to Jim, “it did not do a whole lot in the grand scheme of things.” James was of the perspective that the MC, “did help to a degree. They did help in the sense of role models to look at on campus, and people that I felt like we're holding you accountable.” Jamall said that it helped him mature. According to Jamall, “That was the big thing of like helping me mature, like get to where I am now.” While Mike said, the MC did not play a role.

Table 11

Ways that the services Offered by the MC helped Navigate Academic Challenges Experienced at PWI, n=7

	Number of Participants who cited this Response	Percentage of Participants who cited this Response
Pivotal Role	2	29
Make Mature	1	14
Helped to Some Degree	1	14
Did not Do a Whole Lot	1	14
Place of Shelter	1	14
Did not Play a Role	1	14

Topic 3: Ways that the services Offered by the MC helped Navigate Social Challenges Experienced at PWI

Interview Data. The main responses that were outlined in relation to this topic were *Place where they could go when having Issues, Academic Counseling, Connect with Influential People of Color, Genesis Mentoring and Did not really Use it*. Three of the participants indicated that the MC helped them navigate the social challenges by being a place that they could go whenever they were having issues. These participants were Jeff, Jamall, and Jordan. Richard advanced that he used the MC for counseling. According to Richard, “Counseling. When I went to counseling, it helped me with the community, so it helped me get back where I need to be.” According to Jordan, “MC was a place of refuge just to meet and relax...several times I know that we could go there and kinda release. It was just a safe place to open up. Just to regurgitate what was toxic to you on the campus.” Whereas James outlined that he used it to get connected with influential people of color. In the words of James, “As a way to get my foot in the door with any person of color who had an influence on the campus. So like just being in connection with those people.” Mike indicated that he did not really use the MC while Jim articulated that he used the Genesis Mentoring.

Key themes identified under this topic were *Place where they could go when having Issues, Academic Counseling, Connect with Influential People of Color, Genesis Mentoring and Did not really Use it*. With the most popular area being *Place where they could go when having Issues* as it was denoted by three participants. All the other responses were delineated by only one participant.

Focus Group Data. Three of the four participants in the focus group discussion were of the view that the MC played a role in navigating the social challenges experienced at the PWI. In the focus group discussion, Jamall outlined that because he worked in the Office of Diversity, “it was a little bit easier for me to go to them for.... social help when I needed it

because they were so accessible.” Whereas, James expressed the view that, “I felt ...like it did more for the social aspect, it was more beneficial for that.” Furthermore, James went on further to outline that, the MC, “did make me feel welcome in a social sense just by meeting successful Black people.” Jim was also of the perspective that the MC played more of a social function. To quote Jim, “you did get to meet some pretty cool people along the way and have great relationships.” The majority of participants in the focus group discussion articulated that the MC played a role in helping them with social challenges.

Table 12

Ways that the services Offered by the MC helped Navigate Social Challenges Experienced at PWI, n=7

	Number of Participants who cited this Response	Percentage of Participants who cited this Response
Place where they could go when having Issues	3	29
Academic Counseling	1	14
Connect with Influential People of Color	1	14
Genesis Mentoring Place of Shelter	1	14
Did not really Use it	1	14

Topic 4: Advice for the MC to help Black Males Attend PWI

Focus Group Data. This topic was only related to the focus group discussion and featured the advice that the participant would give to the MC in to help Black males attend the PWI. The responses included *Pushing Agenda More*, *Need Greater Awareness of MC* and *the Setting of a Clear Agenda*. Jamall would advise the MC, “pushing their agenda a little more with the resources they already have because they are good resources.” Jamall also gave the example of the Black male leadership organization as a good initiative that it is not pushed enough. In response to Jamall, Jim made mention of the fact that “we worked in the office of diversity our freshman year and it’s a shame they did not tell us about it.” For James, the advice he would give is to, “just set a clear agenda and set a clear target audience that you want the agenda to reach, cause I felt like it can be all over the place.” In response, Jamall highlighted that the office has to manage all minorities and therefore it is a struggle to figure out how to manage all of the things. The main responses under this topic were *Pushing the Agenda of the MC*, *Greater Awareness of MC* and *the Setting of a Clear Agenda*.

Table 13

Advice for the MC to help Black Males Attend PWI, n=7

	Number of Participants who cited this Response	Percentage of Participants who cited this Response
Pushing the Agenda of the MC	1	14
Greater Awareness of MC	1	14
Setting of Clear Agenda	1	14

Topic 5: Overall Experience of PWI in terms of the MC

Focus Group Data. Themes from this topic were extrapolated from the focus group discussion, and the various responses given include *MC is just something on Paper*, *Working at the MC offered a different perspective* and *Need greater awareness of the MC*. James proffered the perspective that he made the best of the situation and was of the view that the argument that the MC was there to help was just something that is written on a piece of paper. Essentially denoting that the reality of the MC was in name only and was not consistent with the information outlined on paper, for example, a brochure. To quote James, “To say that they are there to help I could not agree with that I feel like it is something nice to put on a sheet of paper.” Whereas Jamall articulated that his experience was different from most students because he worked at the MC and therefore he was able to meet a lot of people and to participate in various activities. According to Jamall, “I think I had a little bit different view because I was always in the office because that was where I worked... I definitely got to meet a lot of people; I definitely got to do a lot of things because of it.” Jim indicated that although the MC said it was there for Black males, the knowledge of its existence is not widespread. Jim went to elaborate that the university could do a better job of making it known. To quote Jim, “Like just to be completely honest if I am walking around campus, I would not know where that is or if that is even a thing. So I just feel like they could do a better job of making us know that it is there.” On the other hand, Mike delineated that he did not really have much experience with the MC and as such probably should not have an input. The major responses under this topic include *MC just something on Paper*, *Working at the MC Offered a Different Perspective* and *Need Greater Awareness of the MC*.

Table 14

Overall Experience of PWI in terms of the MC, n=7

	Number of Participants who cited this Response	Percentage of Participants who cited this Response
MC just something on Paper	1	14
Working at the MC Offered a Different Perspective	1	14
Need Greater Awareness of the MC	1	14

Research Question 2 asked How does a multicultural center assist Black men at a predominately White institution (PWI) to overcome social and academic challenges? The topics that comprise research question two include Utilized Programs and Services of the MCs, Ways that the services Offered by the MC helped Navigate Academic Challenges Experienced at PWI, Ways that the services, Offered by the MC helped Navigate Social Challenges Experienced at PWI, Advice for the MC to help Black Males Attending PWI, and Overall Experience at PWI in terms of the MC. Themes from the responses and the related information provided crucial information for the exploration and subsequent analysis of the wider topic.

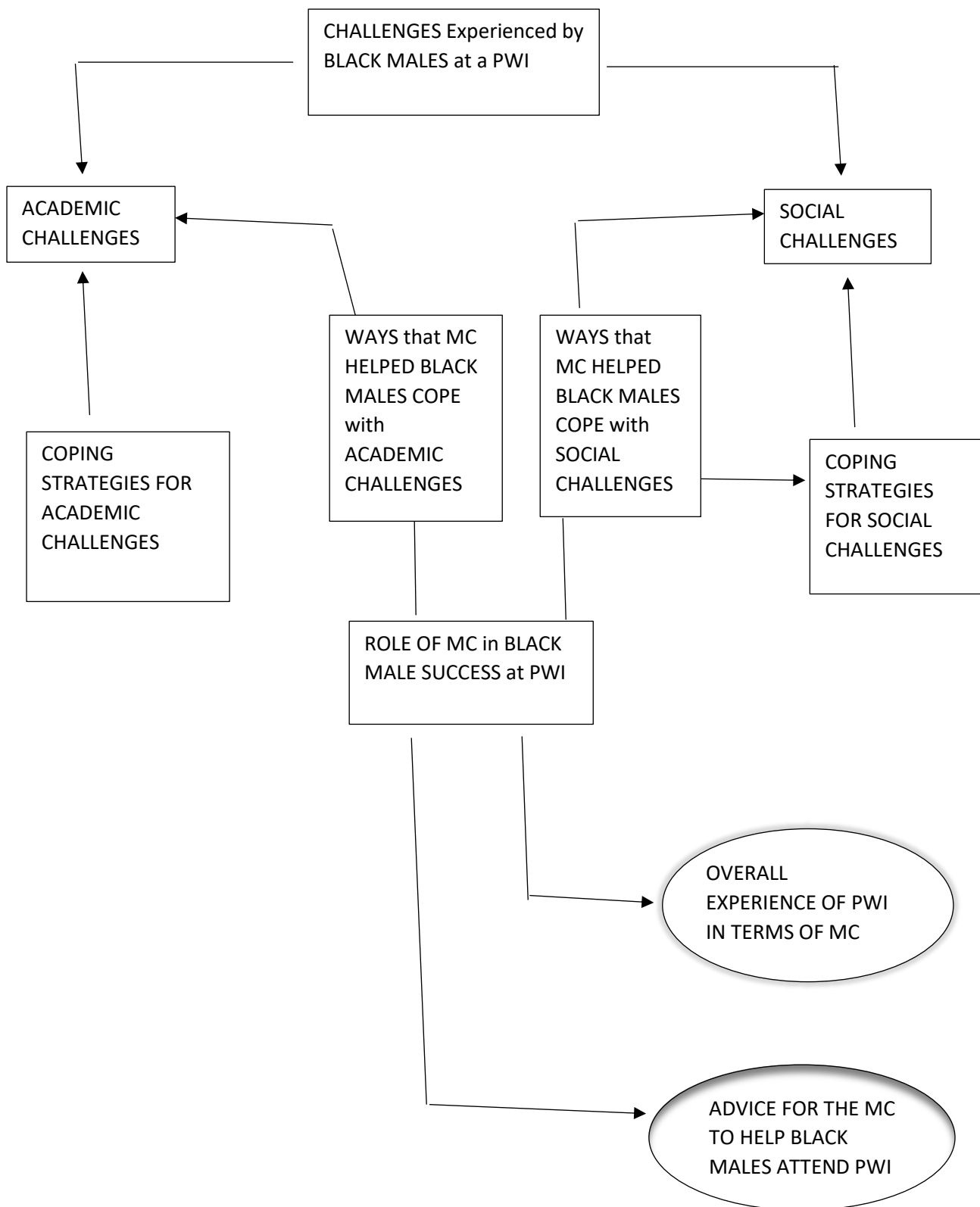


Figure 2. Concept Map of the Topics

The concept map is centered on the role of Black male success at a PWI. This main premise was deconstructed into two key areas: *the Ways that the MC helped Black males cope with Academic challenges* and *the Ways that the MC helped Black males cope with Social Challenges*. Each of these key areas was deconstructed into *Academic or Social Challenges*, and the *Coping Strategies used to address* them. The *Role of the MC in Black male success at a PWI* was then linked to *Overall Experience of PWI in terms of PWI and Advice for the MC to help Black males attend the PWI*.

Conclusion

The chapter showcased the data that was gathered from interviews and a focus group discussion with Black male seniors who accessed the MC at the PWI .It furthered delineated the various topics that were identified and through the related data and showed how these topics were connected to the overall topic of the research. In addition, the presentation of the data from the interviews and focus group discussion set the stage for the discussion in the upcoming chapter.

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Summary of Purpose and Findings

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the ways in which the multicultural center (MC) enables Black male students to be successful at a predominantly White institution (PWI) through the provision of social and academic support. With the hope of highlighting meaningful steps for optimizing the college experiences for Black men at PWIs. Furthermore, the purpose of the study can be viewed in the wider context whereby Black male students often face significant challenges when applying for college, enrolling in college, staying in college and shortening the length of time for graduation. Accordingly, the purpose of this qualitative study was to examine how academic and social programs hosted and offered by the MC at a PWI aided Black male success. Therefore, the outcomes of this study were expected to show how academic and social programs and initiatives hosted by the MC positively influenced student satisfaction and engagement of Black males at a PWI. It was also the expectation that the findings of the study would provide the administration of various PWIs with information to implement additional programs that increase the likelihood of a successful outcome for Black male students. Consequently, the study was guided by the following research questions:

- **Research Question 1.** How do Black men navigate academic and social collegiate challenges at a predominately White institution (PWI)?
- **Research Question 2.** How does a multicultural center assist Black men at a predominately White institution (PWI) to overcome social and academic challenges?

Findings

Demographic Details

The participants in the study were Black male seniors attending the PWI who were 21 years old. Concerning socio-economic background five of the seven participants identified themselves as a middle class while two of the participants indicated that they were from lower socioeconomic status backgrounds. All the participants had a GPA of 3.0 or greater, with two participants having a GPA of 3.0, one participant each having GPAs of 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 respectively, while two participants had the highest GPA of 3.4.

Three participants indicated that they were first-generation college students while four participants indicated that they were not. Two participants had a sports-related major, while the other five participants had majors in Communication, Education, Psychology, Construction Management, and Interior Design. One participant indicated that his college preparation was good, four participants identified their college preparation as average, and two participants indicated that their college preparation was low. None of the participants indicated that they were recruited by the PWI.

Major Findings

The findings from the study were organized under the following topics: *Academic Challenges Experienced as a Black Male at PWI, Social Challenges Experienced as a Black Male at PWI, Coping Strategies used to deal with Academic Challenges Experienced at PWI, Coping Strategies used to deal with Social Challenges Experienced at PWI, Utilized Programs and Services of the MC, Ways that the services Offered by the MC helped Navigate Academic Challenges Experienced at PWI, Ways that the services Offered by the MC helped Navigate Social Challenges Experienced at PWI, Overall Experience as a Black Male at PWI and Advice for the MC to help Black Males Attend PWI.*

Overall Experience as a Black Male at PWI. The findings revealed that the *Overall Experience as a Black Male at the PWI* was described as *Overwhelming Experience, A Black Male is not the same as a White Male, Hard to answer that Question, Pride, Lack of Belonging, Having No Regrets* and *PWI is a Reflection of the Real World*. The response that the experience at the PWI was an Overwhelming Experience coincided with the prevailing views in the literature (Cuyjet, 2009; 2006; Gavins, 2009; Harper, 2012; 2010; 2006a; 2006b). Multiple scholars who explored the enrollment of Black male students at PWIs described the campus experience as overwhelming, precarious, and hostile to Black male students. Furthermore, in addressing the hostile and unwelcoming nature of the campus of PWI to Black male students, various scholars have delineated that the realities for a Black male are not the same as those of a White male (Gavins, 2009; Harper, 2015; McDonald, 2011; Steele, 1992; Walters, 2017).

Lack of Belonging and *PWI is a Reflection of the Real World* is closely related to the finding that the campus experience is overwhelming and that the realities of Black male students and White male students are different. In this regard, *Lack of Belonging* had a pervasive representation in the literature (Berryhill & Bee, 2007; Harper, 2015; Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007; Strayhorn, 2012; Von Robertson & Chaney, 2017, Walton & Cohen, 2007; Wright, 2016). Furthermore, in addressing the issue of *Lack of Belonging* many scholars went on to elaborate that the PWI campuses were not designed for Black male students (Barnes, 2012; Boyd, 2017; Sawyer & Palmer, 2014; Strayhorn, 2013) and argued that some of them have not taken steps to make the campus climate accommodating to Black male students (Barnes, 2012; Boyd, 2017; Sawyer & Palmer, 2014; Strayhorn, 2013). *PWI is a Reflection of the Real World* was consistent with the literature as many authors advanced the argument that the racism and hostility faced by Black male students on the campuses of PWIs is just a reflection of the hostilities and racism that obtains in the wider American society

(Easterwood, 2016; Harper, 2012; 2009; Hayworth, 2014; McDonald, 2011; Oguntokun, 2013; Von Robertson & Cheney, 2017).

The responses of *Having No Regrets* and *Pride* to describe the overall experience at the PWI complement the literature. Similarly, the majority of Black male students who attend colleges and university in the United States are matriculated at PWIs (NCES, 2018; Von Roberston & Cheney, 2017). PWIs are considering as having an abundance of and better quality resources as exemplified in the following excerpt:

Wanting as we do, the best we can get in the way of education—the best as defined by endowment, facilities, library books, publishing faculty, and the like... it is only natural to assume that education from Harvard is better than one from Morehouse.
(Walters, 2017 p. 17)

Thereby, attendance at PWIs is perceived as increasing the likelihood that Black male graduates will have good career options and outcomes after college, ultimately improving their chances for advancement in life.

Utilized Programs and Services of the MC. The responses articulated by the participants in relation to this topic included *Did not use much /Just to get Together, Diversity Ambassadors, Genesis Mentoring, Programs, National Building Coalition Institute (NCBI) Training and, Workshop and Speaker Series*. The viewpoint of *Did not use much /Just to get Together* contradicts the perspectives articulated in the literature that outlines the importance of the MC to Black male students and the myriad of benefits that it provided (Bankole, 2005; Hefner, 2002; Hord, 2005; Patton, 2010). However, the other responses of *Diversity Ambassadors, Genesis Mentoring, Programs, National Building Coalition Institute (NCBI) Training and, Workshop and Speaker Series* were consistent with the viewpoint espoused in the literature. Seeing that the literature highlighted that the MC had a range of initiatives and programs that were designed to provide support (e.g., Diversity Ambassadors, Genesis

Mentoring, Programs, National Building Coalition Institute) (Bankole, 2005; Hefner, 2002; Hord, 2005; Patton, 2010).

Academic Challenges Experienced as a Black Male at PWI. Academic challenges experienced as a Black male at the PWI encompassed *Inadequate Pre-college Preparation, White people have Resources not Available to us, Lack of Mentorship, Lack of Black Faculty and Failure*. The challenge of *Inadequate Pre-college preparation* was well-represented throughout the literature (Brooms & Davis, 2017; Bryant, 2015; Bush & Bush 2010; Gavins, 2009; Harper, 2012; Hoston et al. 2010; McClure 2006; Pascarella & Smart 1991; Patitu, 2007). Furthermore, the point was made that the entrance of Black men into post-secondary education in many instances was preceded by underachievement at the secondary level, in which there was minimal or no collegiate preparatory coursework (Bryant, 2015).

The previously mentioned argument is given further dimension as even in instances where college preparatory courses are a constituent of the school curriculum, Black students have a very low enrollment rate in these classes. This low enrollment rate can be attributed to a myriad of factors, including the proliferation of successful Black men in fields that require little or no formal education, perhaps insinuating that college prep courses are unnecessary (Bryant 2015). Additionally, Black students are sometimes steered into lower level courses instead of college-level courses, especially in the case of low-income students. The aforementioned action is done primarily because Black students are not adequately prepared in the lower grades and teachers have lower expectations for them (Britt, 2014; Bryant, 2015; Naylor, Wyatt-Nichol & Brown, 2015; Robinson, Watson & Adams, 2015; Walters, 2017). Evidently, inadequate college preparation of Black males was not only well-documented in the literature but was explored from various dimensions. Accordingly, the views espoused in the literature that inadequate college preparation is an issue that causes academic challenges in the college environment are in keeping with the perspectives of participants that

inadequate college preparation has resulted in academic challenges (Britt, 2014; Bryant, 2015; Naylor, Wyatt-Nichol & Brown, 2015; Robinson, Watson & Adams, 2015; Walters, 2017).

The perspective that *White people have Resources not Available to us* was credited in the literature as well (Harper, 2015; Walters, 2017). As, the argument was made that Black male experience is shrouded in a wider and entrenched context of societal practices that privilege the White middle and upper-class male (Brooms, 2016; Harper, 2015; Walters, 2017). With the wider argument being that Black students and White students will have vastly different experiences, as White students have access to more resources in various permutations that are not available to Black students (McDonald, 2011; Steele, 1992).

Lack of Mentorship was found to be one of the academic challenges outlined by the participants. This finding was credited in the literature as the point was made that Black males at PWIs encounter the academic challenge of lack of role models, mentors and advocates (Bianco, Leech, & Mitchell, 2011; Britt, 2014; Ford, 2014; Harper, 2012; Naylor, Wyatt-Nichol & Brown, 2015; Robinson, Watson & Adams, 2015; Walters, 2017).

Furthermore, the response of *Lack of Mentorship* was also portrayed as being a major contributory factor to the various academic and social challenges faced by Black male students at PWIs (Bianco, Leech, & Mitchell, 2011; Britt, 2014; Ford, 2014; Harper, 2012; Naylor, Wyatt-Nichol & Brown, 2015; Robinson, Watson & Adams, 2015; Walters, 2017). Moreover, in the literature the *Lack of Mentorship* that is experienced by the Black males was inextricably linked to the *Lack of Black Faculty* (Bianco, Leech, & Mitchell, 2011; Britt, 2014; Ford, 2014; Harper, 2012; Naylor, Wyatt-Nichol & Brown, 2015; Robinson, Watson & Adams, 2015; Walters, 2017).

The finding *Lack of Black Faculty* was corroborated by the literature. In fact this was one of academic challenges experienced by Black males at a PWI that was given much focus in

the literature (Benton, 2001; Britt, 2014; Harper, 2012; Harper, 2006a, 2006b; Hefner, 2002; Johnson, 2013; Naylor, Wyatt-Nichol & Brown, 2015; Patton, 2006b; Robinson, Watson & Adams, 2015; Sanders, 2016; Walters, 2017). Accordingly, the findings from this study strengthened this argument. It is undeniable that the race complement of faculty members at PWIs is in sync with the race complement of students at PWIs. That is, the faculty members are overwhelmingly White (Britt, 2014; Harper, 2012; 2006a, 2006b; Naylor, Wyatt-Nichol & Brown, 2015; Robinson, Watson & Adams, 2015; Walters, 2017). Moreover, the sad reality is that whereas the enrollment rates of Black students in higher education have shown an increase in recent years, Whites are still tremendously overrepresented in faculty positions (JBHE, 2013; NCES, 2018; Snyder, de Brey, & Dillow, 2016). Therefore the Black males at PWIs have a limited number or no faculty members who look like them, with whom they can consult for much-needed guidance and assistance throughout their academic career (Barker & Avery, 2012; Quayle & Harper, 2015). To add further context, a study that was conducted by the Journal of Blacks in Higher Education (JBHE) in 2007 denoted that Blacks comprise only about 4% of full-time faculty at colleges and universities (excluding HBCUs which would raise the average to 5%). Overall, the majority of faculty members at the colleges and universities at 80% are White (JBHE, 2013). In 2013, 5.5% of full-time faculty members were Blacks whereas Black males comprised 2.4% of faculty members (Snyder, de Brey, & Dillow, 2016). In 2016, 6% of the faculty positions in colleges and universities were occupied by Blacks, with Black males accounting for 3% (NCES, 2018). Consequently, the views articulated by the students are reflected in the literature.

Failure as one of the academic challenges found to be experienced by the participants in this study is clearly identified and researched in the literature (Bonilla-Silva 2010; Clu Clewell & Taylor Anderson, 1995; Feagin 1998; Feagin, Hernan & Imani 1996; Flowers, 2006; Gavins, 2009; Harper, 2012; IHEP, 2010; Masters, 2014; Mettler, 2014; Naylor,

Wyatt-Nichol & Brown, 2015; Robertson 2012; Solorzano et al. 2000; Strayhorn, 2014). So much so, that scholars have called for a new lens of viewing Blacks in higher education that is achievement / accomplishment based, namely the Anti-Deficit Achievement Framework (Harper, 2015; 2012; 2007; 2006a; 2006b; Harper & Patton, 2007). This Anti-Deficit Achievement Framework advocates for the study of Black men so as to proffer a positive view of their accomplishments, instead of focusing on their poor performance and reasons for their poor performance. However, it is crucial that it be highlighted that in the literature the failure of Black males at PWIs is inextricably linked to their high attrition rate (Wright, 2016; Von Robertson & Chaney, 2017). In fact, Black males have the highest attrition rate of any college student demographic (Harper, 2015; Harper, Berhanu, Davis & McGuire, 2015; Johnson, 2013; Von Robertson & Chaney, 2017; Strayhorn, 2008). The results of this study also contributed to the academic canon regarding the failure of Black male students at PWIs as it delineated the ways that a hostile and unwelcoming college campus leads to lack of belonging and isolation and ultimately causes failure.

Coping Strategies used to deal with Academic Challenges Experienced at PWI. It was found that the coping strategies used by participants to deal with Academic Challenges Experienced were *Seeking Academic Counseling, Seeking Tutoring, Running, Get involved in Clubs, Prayer, Persistence, Smoke and Drink, and Talk to Friends*. Talk to Friends as a coping strategy for academic challenges was corroborated in the literature (Barker & Avery, 2012; Harper, 2012; 2006b; Hausmann et al., 2009). As throughout the literature Talk to friends was presented as a way of coping with and ultimately overcoming academic challenges (Barker & Avery, 2012; Harper, 2012; 2006b; Hausmann et al., 2009; Johnson, 2013).

Get involved in Clubs as a coping strategy for academic challenges was identified in the literature (Museus, 2008). His study revealed that ethnic student organizations or clubs was a

source of cultural familiarity, assisted students in managing cultural expression and provided cultural validation. Overall these clubs were pivotal in assisting racial minority students in acclimating at PWIs.

The finding of the use of drinking to cope with the social challenges at the PWI was credited in the literature. Considering that a study by Watkins, Green, Goodson, Guidry, and Stanley (2007) revealed that Black males at PWIs used excessive drinking to cope with the stressors in the PWI campus environment. In addition, smoking was also credited in the literature as a maladaptive coping strategy that was used by Black men at PWIs (Watkins, 2006).

Prayer as a coping strategy used by Black males to deal with the academic challenges faced at the PWI was credited in the literature. Seeing that a study conducted by Constantine, Miville, Warren, Gainor, and Lewis-Cole (2006) indicated that religion and spirituality helped the Black male students overcome challenges experienced on PWI campuses, Prayer, in particular, was highlighted as a playing a central role.

Concerning *Persistence*, the findings delineated that persistence as a trait was used as a means to cope. However, in the literature, there was a predominant focus on persistence from a different angle. Seeing that the literature focused on the gaps in persistence by Black males at PWIs from an academic perspective (Astin, 1984; Berryhill & Bee, 2007; Cuyjet, 2006; Harper, 2006a; 2006b, 2012; 2015; Ross et al., 2012). Seeking Academic Counseling was credited in the literature (Gasman, et al., 2008; Guiffrida, 2006). This academic counseling entails advice about courses and a discussion of ways to navigate the challenges in the college environment including academic challenges (Guiffrida, 2006). In the literature *Seeking Tutoring* was credited as being used to cope with academic challenges at PWIs by Black male students (McDonald, 2011). However, in various segments of the literature the perspective was advanced that often time despite encountering academic difficulty, Black

male students are unlikely to seek out tutoring services because of an all-White faculty (Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010; Von Robertson & Cheney, 2017) and hostile campus climate (Berryhill & Bee, 2007; Harper, 2015; Smith et al., 2007; Strayhorn, 2012; Von Robertson & Chaney, 2017). This viewpoint was consistent with the findings of the study.

Ways that the services Offered by the MC helped Navigate Academic Challenges Experienced at PWI. The ways that services offered by the MC helped participants to navigate the academic challenges encompassed *Pivotal Role*, *Make Mature*, *Helped to Some Degree*, *Did not do a Whole Lot*, *Place of Shelter* and *Did not Play a Role*. The responses of *Pivotal Role*, *Make Mature*, and *Place of Shelter* were strongly corroborated in the literature. As the importance of the MC to Black male students, in addition to the myriad of benefits that it provided was highlighted in various segments of the literature (Bankole, 2005; Hefner, 2002; Hord, 2005; Patton, 2010). Furthermore, there was a discrepancy between the response *Helped to Some degree* and the literature as the MCs were delineated as providing a tremendous amount of assistance (Bankole, 2005; Hefner, 2002; Hord, 2005; Patton, 2010). In light of the aforementioned, the other responses of *Did not do a Whole Lot* and *Did not Play a Role* advanced by the participants contradicted the prevailing views in the literature.

Social Challenges Experienced as a Black Male at PWI. The findings revealed that the social challenges that were experienced by the participants at the PWI encompassed *Financial Challenges*, *Non-Inclusion*, *Stigma*, *People talking to you like you are Stupid*, *Being in the Small Minority*, *Inability to access White Fraternities*, *White people have Resources not Available to us* and *Not seeing Representation*. The finding of *financial challenges* was consistent with the perspectives espoused in the literature. In fact, financial challenges were among the most pervasive challenges presented in the literature (Benton, 2001; Britt, 2014; Naylor, Wyatt-Nichol & Brown, 2015; Robinson, Watson & Adams, 2015; Walters, 2017). Many Black male students originate from predominantly low socio-economic

backgrounds and therefore have limited financial resources (Bush & Bush 2010; College Board, 2010; Dancy, 2009; Furr & Elling 2002; Gavins, 2009; Patitu 2007; Von Robertson & Chaney, 2017). In this regard, the limited financial resources or the absence of financial resources can result in serious social challenges for Black males at a PWI (Bush & Bush 2010; Furr & Elling 2002; Patitu 2007).

The finding of *Non-Inclusion* was another challenge experienced by Black males at PWIs that was given prominent attention in the literature (Benton, 2001; Gasman, Hirschfeld & Vultaggio, 2008; Von Robertson & Chaney, 2017). Virtually all the scholarly works that examined Black male students at PWIs addressed the non-inclusion which also encompassed the Black students' sense of isolation, exclusion and the sense of not belonging (Berryhill & Bee, 2007; Harper, 2015; Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007; Strayhorn, 2012; Von Robertson & Chaney, 2017, Walton & Cohen, 2007; Wright, 2016). Additionally, the *Inability to access White Fraternities* can also be seen as a type of non-inclusion which is in keeping with the views espoused in the literature (Berryhill & Bee, 2007; Harper, 2015; Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007; Strayhorn, 2012; Von Robertson & Chaney, 2017). Moreover, the *Inability to access White Fraternities* is also closely associated to a prominent view in the literature that the PWI was not designed to accommodate Black students their needs or cultural realities (Barnes, 2012; Williams, 1999).

The social challenge of *Inability to Access White Fraternities* was also inextricably linked to three other social challenges that were identified by the Black male participants at the PWI namely *Stigma*, *People talking to you like you are Stupid*, and *Being in the Small Minority*. These social challenges were well documented in the literature (Eccles, Wong & Peck 2006; Harper, 2015; Hope, Keels & Durkee, 2016; Jackson & Wingfield, 2013; Robertson 2012; Steele, 2010; Sue, 2010; Von Robertson & Chaney, 2017). Particularly as it concerns *Stigma* and *People talking to you like you are Stupid*, the literature delineated

numerous examples and studies where Black males enrolled at PWIs faced racism, negative stereotypes and received dehumanizing treatment (Eccles, Wong & Peck 2006; Harper, 2015; 2012; Robertson 2012; Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007; Von Robertson & Chaney, 2017). Concerning *Being in the Small Minority*, this social challenge was universally acknowledged in the literature (JBHE, 2013; Harper, 2012; 2006a; 2006b; McDonald, 2011; NCES, 2018; Robertson 2012; Von Robertson & Chaney, 2017). Interestingly, the concept of minority in the literature was transmuted to minoritized. ‘Minoritized’ was used by scholars as a way to depict non-White students who attend PWIs (Chase, Dowd, Pazich, & Bensimon, 2014; Harper, 2015; Stewart, 2013).

The perspective of *White people have Resources not Available to us* as indicated by the Black male participants at the PWI was reflected in the literature (Harper, 2012; McDonald, 2011; Walters, 2017). In addition, the finding of *Not seeing Representation* was consistent with the prevailing views in the literature (Pittman, 2012; McDonald, 2012; Walter, 2017). Moreover, this social challenge is associated with the previously identified academic challenge of *Lack of Black Faculty*. Besides, it also encompasses the lack of representation of people from the Black ethnic groups in administration and fellow students. This is consistent with the perspective depicted in the literature that Black males are not represented across the various levels of education which include the academic and administrative dimensions. As it relates to Black male administrators in colleges and universities, in 2014, they accounted for 5.2% of the total full-time employees, not including faculty (Snyder, de Brey, & Dillow, 2016). Overall, all the social challenges expressed by the 86 % of Black male participants at a PWI were substantiated by the literature. Results from a study conducted by Schwitzer, Griffin, Ancis, and Thomas (1999) that investigated the social adjustment of Black men at PWI’s yielded a model which encapsulated the social reality of the students. Key elements of the model included (a) a sense of underrepresentedness; (b) perceptions of racism; (c)

difficulty in approaching faculty and (d) faculty unfamiliarity (faculty that the students perceive as being very different from them).

Coping Strategies used to deal with Social Challenges Experienced at PWI. From the findings, Coping Strategies used by participants to deal with Social Challenges Experienced at the PWI encompassed: *Going to the MC, Talking to Family, Talking to Friends, Prayer, Smoke and Drink, and Scream and Vent*. *Going to the MC* was consistent with the views in the literature. Furthermore, going to the MCs was presented as a central mechanism in the literature for coping with the social challenges experienced at the PWI. Previous research demonstrates that the MC was delineated as a safe haven where students could go to take a break from an unwelcoming and hostile campus climate (Bankole, 2005; Young & Hannon, 2002). The MC was identified as an important coping strategy for Black men at PWIs. In the literature, the MC was described as providing a suite of pivotal university services including social support (Bankole, 2005). The services of the MCs provide a plethora of benefits for Black students: serving as a home away from home, assisting students to cope with feelings of isolation at PWIs, and helping them to transition to university life by providing programming and support services (Bankole, 2005; Hefner, 2002; Hord, 2005; Patton, 2010).

Talking to Family and *Talking to Friends* were among the most central strategies identified in the literature that Black male students used to cope with social challenges at PWIs. *Talking to Family* was also seen as a central way of coping with the social strategies experienced as it was a means of support and transcending the stress and negativity at the campus by interacting with people that the Black male students trust and hold dear (Barnes, 2012; Ishiyama, 2007; Kinzie, Gonyea, Shoup & Kuh, 2008; Moore & Toliver, 2008; Strayhorn, 2008; Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007). To elaborate further in the literature, family support was identified as an important factor for the persistence of Black males to graduation

at PWIs (Barnes, 2012; Harper, 2006a; 2006b). A study conducted by Maina, Burrell, and Hampton (2011) highlighted the positive influence that friends and a social network of friends can make on the success of Black males at a PWI. It was articulated that, “Friendships and positive relationships is what really helped a lot of the participants to survive in an often hostile environment (Maina, Burrell & Hampton, 2011, p. 7).” In addition, there are other places in the literature where the importance of friends in enabling Black male students to survive and thrive was highlighted (Barnes, 2012; Davis et al., 2004; Harper, 2006; Johnson, 2013). *Drinking* as a coping strategy as previously discussed was credited the literature (Moschella, 2013; Watkins et al., 2007). The response of *Smoke* as aforementioned was credited in the literature as a maladaptive coping behavior that was used by Black males to address the harsh realities at PWIs (Watkins, 2006). *Prayer* as a coping strategy to deal with the challenges experienced at a PWI was credited in the literature (Constantine et al., 2006; Walters, 2017). However, the response of *Scream and Vent* was not presented in the literature as a way that Black males used to cope with the social challenges experienced at a PWI.

Ways that the services Offered by the MC helped Navigate Social Challenges Experienced at PWI. The findings in relation to the ways that the services offered by the MC helped the participants to navigate the social challenges included *a Place where they could go when having Issues, Academic Counseling, Connect with Influential People of Color, Genesis Mentoring* and *Did not really Use much / Just to get Together*. The responses of *Place where they could go when having Issues, Academic Counseling, Connect with Influential People of Color* and *Genesis Mentoring* were substantiated in literature. Seeing that a plethora of benefits that the MC provided which encapsulated the aforementioned was denoted in the literature (Bankole, 2005; Hefner, 2002; Hord, 2005; Patton, 2010). However, the response of *Did not really Use much* contradicts the prevailing views articulated in the literature.

Advice for the MC to help Black Males Attend PWI. The Advice for the MC to help Black Males Attend PWI as indicated by the participants included *Pushing Agenda More, Need Greater Awareness of MC* and *the Setting of a Clear Agenda*. These findings were not consistent with the prevailing views established in the literature. Considering that, the views presented in the literature spoke to the tremendous effect of the MC in helping the Black male students survive and thrive at PWIs (Bankole, 2005; Hefner, 2002; Hord, 2005; Patton, 2010; Pittman, 1994; Princes, 2004).

Overall Experience of PWI in terms of the MC

The *Overall Experience of the PWI* in terms of the MC was described by the participants as *MC is just something on Paper, Working at the MC Offered a Different perspective* and *Need Greater Awareness of the MC*. The aforementioned findings contradict the views expressed in the literature. In the literature, the MCs were viewed as a welcome respite on the often challenging campuses of the PWI. Largely because the perspectives in the literature delineated the various ways in which the MC was used to benefit the Black male on the campus of the PWI. These benefits included providing social support, tutoring and making the campus more attractive and welcoming (Bankole, 2005; Hefner, 2002; Hord, 2005; Patton, 2010; Pittman, 1994; Princes, 2004). However, the findings from the Black male students at the PWI are in stark contrast as exemplified by the perspective that the *MC is just something on Paper* and *need Greater Awareness of the MC*. Furthermore, in terms of the response *Working at the MC Offered a Different perspective*, this viewpoint was articulated by a participant who was a student employee at the MC and also used its services. However, this perspective was not credited in the literature. Seeing that, in the literature, there was not an exploration of how working at the MC gave the Black male student an enhanced experience or perspective regarding the benefits of the MC.

Findings in Relation to the Framework

The findings resulted in some minor adjustments in the conceptual framework for the study. The original conceptual framework (See Appendix H) comprised the challenges faced by Black males at PWIs, and how the application or non-application of coping strategies through the lenses of the theories would result in their failure or success. The theories that were used were Tinto's Model of Integration, Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST) and Social Cognitive Theory. Tinto (1993) suggested that the more a student feels socially and academically integrated into the institution, the greater the likelihood of persistence through to graduation. PVEST centers on the inevitable coping process required by individuals as they mature and progressively expand their navigation of space and place. Social Cognitive Theory is premised on the idea that an individual's behavior has a direct influence on the course of events that occur in his or her life (Bandura, 1999). Based on these theoretical constructs the MC had a central place in the framework as a coping strategy that was used by the Black male students to deal with and overcome social and academic challenges. The central role of the MC as a constituent of the coping strategies in the framework was assigned based on the fact that the study was premised on the use of the MC as a contributory factor to the success of Black males at a PWI.

However, based on the findings the conceptual framework was reworked (See Appendix I) with the coping strategies based on the individual theories being removed. Instead, general coping strategies from the findings were included. These coping strategies were: *Seeking Academic Counseling and Tutoring*, *Running*, *Get Involved in Clubs*, *Prayer*, and *Persistence*, *Talk to Friends / Family* and *Scream and Vent*. In addition based on the findings, the role of the MC as a major coping strategy was shifted to a minor role as a coping strategy for the social challenges experienced by Black males at a PWI.

Implications of the Study

Implications for Black Male Students at PWI

From the findings, Black male students face tremendous social and academic challenges at PWIs. This argument becomes even more worrying when contextualized against the works of Wade Nobles (2013; 2006) whose central premise has continued to advocate that Black Psychology is a crucial element of understanding these challenges, and if adroitly applied can be pivotal towards remedying many of the entrenched ills faced by people of African descent. Moreover, many of the initiatives designed by the institution that are supposed to assist the Black male students such as the MC may only provide assistance in a limited social sense. However, even though the MC did not provide direct academic assistance, the assistance facilitated in terms of social support put the participants in good stead to devise their own academic coping strategies. Especially since the MC was a place where they could relax and meet with their peers. They were able to devise academic coping strategies on an individual basis or in conjunction with their fellow peers. However, Black male students at PWIs cannot solely depend on the institution to publicize the initiatives and programs that are available. Black male students should also take the responsibility to seek out and discover the available institutional offerings that can provide social and academic support. Finally, Black male students have to mentally prepare themselves for the foreseeable challenges that accompany attendance a PWI. Consequently, they will have to devise and apply effective coping strategies in order to survive, thrive, and be successful.

Implications for MC at PWIs

In this study, the MC did not provide substantive academic support to Black males. Accordingly, the MC at the PWI is more of a space for social gatherings. Notwithstanding, the MC must be applauded for the important role that it is playing in helping with the social challenges. Seeing that the social assistance was pivotal in empowering students to deal with

academic challenges as they were able to devise coping strategies in this regard on both an individual and peer level.

Implications for the Administration of PWIs

The results garnered from this study substantiate the perspective that the administration of PWIs is mainly concerned with the realities of the majority or dominant student groups. This study concretizes the view that there is a need for the administration at PWIs to review how they approach institutional support for Black male students. Particularly with a view to strengthen social support, introduce initiatives for academic support and implement measures to ensure that there is widespread awareness among students of the services offered by the MC.

Limitations

The study was conducted using a small sample of seven Black male participants at a single PWI through the use of interviews and a focus group discussion. Therefore the resulting generalizations may prove to be limited. In addition, the findings may not represent the experience of Black male students at other PWIs. Furthermore, all the participants in the sample were seniors so the experience of Black males with the use of an MC at a PWI could not be compared across the various stages of the college experience. The researcher sourced the students for the study sample based on convenience at a time of year when students were difficult to find. In addition, the researcher did not require a level of engagement with the MC. Finally, the results of this study may not be applicable to Black female students. Moreover, the findings of the study do not imply that MCs and their modalities of operation are homogenous across PWIs.

Recommendations

Black Male Students at PWI

It is recommended that Black males at PWIs clearly recognize and accept the particular circumstances that they experience at PWIs so that they can be well-placed to devise appropriate coping strategies. Following which, the Black male students should negotiate a combination of individual coping strategies and institutional initiatives that will best enable them to transcend the myriad of challenges they encounter at PWIs. As the findings exemplify, the initiatives that are available to provide support to Black males at the PWI may not be readily known or widely promulgated. The recommendation in this regard is that the Black male students actively and persistently seek out initiatives that the institution may have in place in an attempt to best cope with various issues. Therefore, it is highly recommended that Black males be prepared to devise and use individually and collectively driven coping strategies.

Furthermore, the findings in this study demonstrated students' lack of engagement with Black faculty and faculty in general. It is recommended that Black male students assume a mind-set which enables them to overcome discomfort about approaching White faculty and their White peers in order to get much needed academic help or even access to resources. A precursor to the assumption of this mind-set is having an honest internal dialogue of what it means to be a Black male student at a PWI and the importance of optimal interaction with White faculty and their White peers to the advancement of their academic career. Additionally, it is recommended that Black males at PWIs be willing to examine their pattern of interaction (or non-interaction) with their White faculty and White peers with a view towards increasing contextual awareness of the PWI and ultimately optimising interaction. Especially against the context that they have to exist and seek to be academically and in some

cases socially successful in a space that is dominated by Whites and under a system that privileges Whites and White culture.

Most importantly, it is recommended that Black male students join with their fellow Black male peers and collectively brainstorm to develop practical solutions and lobby for institutional initiatives to address the inevitable social and academic challenges present at PWIs. More specifically, the Black male students should be encouraged and supported to develop an academic support network with the objective of providing academic support to Black male students. In addition, this network could also facilitate referrals for Black male students to increase their likelihood of accessing support for the academic and social challenge that they may experience. The aforementioned argument is bolstered when contextualized against the work of Wade Nobles (2015) who has promulgated the need for the development and use of a Pan African Black Psychology for addressing the egregious and entrenched challenges faced by people of African descent generally and particularly in American society. At the core of this discipline is the unified approach of an African-centered paradigm that would privilege the particular realities of people of African descent such as their history, life experiences and traditions.

MCs at PWIs

The findings show that the MC was instrumental in helping participants address the social challenges that they experienced at the PWI. Furthermore, this social support enabled them to devise academic coping strategies on both an individual and peer level. An awareness of the services of the MC was not widespread and could be expanded to include academic initiatives. Accordingly, the role of the MC regarding assistance to Black male students should be re-examined. It is recommended that the MC redouble its efforts regarding student engagement especially in terms of the effectiveness and awareness of available programs and the initiatives. Closely related to the aforementioned point, the MC should take active and

strategic steps to combat student apathy by ensuring that the programs and initiatives are engaging, and are effectual in addressing the challenges of Black male students. Furthermore, the MC needs to play an active role in ensuring that there is strategic placement of Black faculty to provide much needed mentorship support for the Black male students. Additionally, the MC should organize efforts to encourage the administration of the PWI to take steps toward the recruitment and retention of Black faculty.

Administration at PWIs

In the present day American society, there is a call for and a need to stimulate diversity in institutions of higher learning. In fact, many PWIs have affirmed a commitment to diversity and the implementation of initiatives such as the MC to ensure that minority groups such as Black males are able to navigate social and academic challenges. Accordingly, it is recommended that the administration at PWIs put greater effort into ensuring that initiatives such as the MC that are designed to help Black men assimilate into the wider PWI are effective. It is also recommended that in improving, designing, and implementing initiatives to help Black males assimilate into the campus are supported.

Arguably, the most crucial step that the administration would need to take is to recognize that as a minority group often prone to underachievement; Black males have unique challenges in the campus environment. Consequently, at all levels, policies, programs, and initiatives should be subsequently designed and developed based on the aforementioned premise increasing the likelihood that these will help Black male students overcome the social and academic challenges at the PWI. The provision of adequate funding is closely related to the aforementioned argument. Furthermore, with an absence of funding the policies, programs and initiatives will only be good ideas as they will not be able to be implemented to good effect for the benefit of Black males at PWIs. Finally, sustained funding is imperative if these policies, programs, and initiatives are to be sustained from year to year.

However, to buffer against the likelihood of little or even the absence of funding, PWIs can ensure that there is inbuilt considerations and allowances for Black male students in all their policies, programs and initiatives.

Administrators at the PWI should conduct orientation sessions for Black males at the beginning of their freshman year and again at the beginning of the spring semester of their freshman year. This orientation should be strategically designed and delivered to best inform Black male students about the institution and its systems and policies. In particular, the systems and policies available to provide support and assistance for the various challenge that they may encounter. More specifically, the first orientation should be an introduction to the institution and its available systems for support, while the spring orientation should focus on the adjustment of the students, addressing feedback and gathering information for optimal alignment of student realities, and the initiatives of the university that are available for social and academic support. In these orientation sessions, the administration could invite Black faculty if they are available; or alternatively, if there are no Black faculty, opportunities for introduction to key White faculty members should be facilitated.

The faculty at PWIs are predominantly White; therefore the administration at the PWI should offer and encourage cultural competency training. The focus of the cultural competency training should be sensitization regarding the predisposed difficulties of underrepresented racial groups such as the Black male students in the PWI environment and subsequent equipping of the White faculty with specific tools and strategies for optimal interaction and engagement.

Finally, the administration of the PWI should regularly assess the programs and initiatives of the MC to ascertain if they are having the desired effects on Black males. This supports making necessary adjustments, developing and implementing new initiatives that are

tailored to assist Black male students in navigating the social and academic challenges at the PWI. Furthermore, the viewpoint and suggestions of Black male students should be given primary consideration throughout this assessment.

Future Research

Based on the findings from this study, it is recommended that future research pursue the exploration of the role that the MC plays in Black male success across multiple PWIs. Furthermore, a comparative analysis of the role that the MC plays in Black male success at a PWI from the south and a PWI from the north could be undertaken. Another angle for future research could be a comparative exploration of the role of the MC on Black student success at a PWI between male and female students. Future research could feature a mixed methods approach that explores the role of the MC in Black male success at a PWI from a comparative quantitative and qualitative perspective. Yet another area of focus could involve a comparative exploration of the role of the MC in Black male success at a PWI between Black male freshman and Black male seniors. There could also be an investigation of the role of the MC on Black male success at a PWI from the perspective of the faculty. The investigation of the role of the MC on the success of the Black male student at a PWI from the perspective of the administration of the institution could also be investigated. There are various angles through which future research could inform Black students' success at a PWI.

Impact Statement

From the results of this study, it can be ascertained that the outcome regarding the role of the MC on Black male success added a new dimension to the academic canon of Black men in higher education. The outcome of the study highlights the resiliency of Black males who devised and used their individually driven strategies in order to survive and thrive at PWIs. Accordingly, this research outcome added further attention to the plight of Black males at PWIs and emphasized the urgent need for the administration at PWIs to design initiatives and

ensure that the MC are effective. With the hope that an optimal experience for Black males at PWIs will have the domino effect of increasing their recruitment, persistence, retention and graduation rates. Ultimately, improving the life outcomes and capacity for upward mobility of Black men in American society.

Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to investigate the role of the multicultural center in the success of Black males at a predominantly White institution. It was conducted through interviews with seven participants and a focus group discussion. The findings revealed that the MC mainly contributed to the success of Black male students at the PWI through the provision of assistance in the social sense as it essentially was an emotional outlet and pillar for them. The MC mainly served as a place for ‘blowing off steam’ at social gatherings with friends, this assistance was pivotal in enabling the participants to devise academic coping strategies both individually and in conjunction with their peers. The findings of the study also gave deep insights into the academic and social challenges that Black male students face and the various modalities that they used to cope. This work adds a new dimension to the previous research as it focused on Black men at a PWI and the role that the MC played in their success. This new angle also provided further insight into the realities faced by Black men on the campuses of PWIs as it facilitated an in-depth exploration of their viewpoint regarding the social and academic issues that faced at a PWI.

The history of Black men in higher education, at best, can be described as precarious and exclusionary. Even though progress has been made in some areas such as accessibility, many problems remain, not to mention problems that have been birthed with each step toward progress. Now more than ever a college degree is extremely important in American society for acquiring a higher paying job. This is especially challenging for Black males, who often

face racism and have systemic barriers to gaining employment and attaining social mobility upward in American society. While it may seem encouraging that increasing numbers of Black males are accessing higher education, the grave reality that is many are not persisting to graduation or are taking up to six years to graduate, especially if they are enrolled at a PWI (Harper et al., 2015). Hence, the administrations of PWIs need to ensure that they design and develop initiatives such as MCs to provide much needed academic and social support to Black males. Even if they already have initiatives such as MCs in place, the administration of PWIs must ensure that systematic assessments are conducted to ensure their effectiveness. Against the context of the increasing call for diversity all at levels of American society, historically marginalized and undervalued demographic groups such as Black males must be given every chance to access and succeed in higher education so that they can be empowered to succeed in the highest pinnacles of American life.

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APPENDIX A

Focus Group Protocol

**Jack N. Averitt College of
Graduate Studies /College of Education**

1. Share what influenced your decision to enroll at the PWI?
2. What are some of the major social challenges that you have experienced as a Black male at the PWI?
3. What are some of the major academic challenges that you have experienced as a Black male at the PWI?
4. What are some of the coping strategies that you have used to deal with the social challenges that you have experienced at the PWI?
5. What are some of the coping strategies that you have used to deal with the academic challenges that you have experienced at the PWI?
6. What particular services of the MC did you access?
7. How did the use of the services offered by the MC help you to navigate the social challenges that you experienced at the PWI?
8. How did the use of the services offered by the MC help you to navigate the academic challenges that you experienced at the PWI?
9. What role did the MC play in helping you to make it to your senior year?
10. Tell me about a time that the MC really was critical in making you feel comfortable, wanted or valued at the PWI?



**GEORGIA
SOUTHERN
UNIVERSITY**

APPENDIX B
Interview Protocol

**Jack N. Averitt College of
Graduate Studies /College of Education**

1. Share what influenced your decision to enroll at the PWI?
2. What are some of the major social challenges that you have experienced as a Black male at the PWI?
3. What are some of the major academic challenges that you have experienced as a Black male at the PWI?
4. What are some of the coping strategies that you have used to deal with the social challenges that you have experienced at the PWI?
5. What are some of the coping strategies that you have used to deal with the academic challenges that you have experienced at the PWI?
6. What particular services of the MC did you access?
7. How did the use of the services offered by the MC help you to navigate the social challenges that you experienced at the PWI?
8. How did the use of the services offered by the MC help you to navigate the academic challenges that you experienced at the PWI?
9. What role did the MC play in helping you to make it to your senior year?
10. Tell me about a time that the MC really was critical in making you feel comfortable, wanted or valued at the PWI?



APPENDIX C

Social Media / Recruitment Letter

Jack N. Averitt College of Graduate Studies /College of Education

Dear Prospective Participant,

My name is Stephan T. Moore, and I am currently a candidate in the doctoral program at Georgia Southern University. To fulfill the requirements of the program, I am undertaking a study entitled *A Multicultural Center's Role In Black Male Success At A Predominantly White Institution*. Presently, I am recruiting participants for an interview regarding the aforementioned topic. Should you be interested in participating, please contact me. I can be reached by phone at (700) 747-7996 or email stephan.moore@gmail.com. You can also contact me if you are aware of anyone who also may fit the research guidelines and may be interested in participating. Attached is a copy of the guidelines for participants

Sincerely,

Stephan T. Moore

**ARE YOU A SENIOR?
HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED...**

MARGINALIZATION?
ISOLATION?

VOICELESSNESS?
SEGREGATION?




LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!
Take part in a study analyzing multicultural centers' role in black male success at predominately white institutions.

CONTACT:
Stephan Moore
Doctoral Candidate
Georgia Southern University
sm07795@georgiasouthern.edu

STUDY APPROVED BY VICE PRESIDENT FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

About the Candidate



STEPHAN MOORE

With an extensive background in higher education including financial planning, student retention, as well as staff training and a student focused approach to community building I currently serve as the Vice Chancellor for Student Engagement at the University of Louisiana - Alexandria.

On my previous appointment serving as the Dean of Student Affairs for the University of the Virgin Islands, I sat on various committees to assist as they prepare for their 2016/2017 Middle States Commission on Higher Education accreditation visit. In addition to committee service, I was responsible for several areas within student affairs including but not limited to Residential Life, Student Activities, Health Services as well Career and Employment Services.

Before UVI, at Georgia Perimeter College I held the position of Director of Student Life while serving on numerous enrollment management, academic, advisement and other student affairs committees for five diverse campuses. I also served as director of Residence Life and Housing for the Art Institute where I had oversight of areas about residential life, student housing, counseling and matters of student conduct. I was also area coordinator at North Carolina Central University and have served as a Student Affairs specialist at Louisiana State University. Additionally, I have taught college courses in areas about the first year/freshman experience.

My current and past professional experiences have provided me the opportunities to work closely with community service organizations and businesses on a local level. As a student affairs practitioner, our profession has placed me at the center of community relations, where I have worked effectively with college officials, faculty and staff in fostering a positive working partnership within our campus community. I am strongly committed to retention in the areas focused on academic and student success.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Stephan Moore
Doctoral Candidate
Georgia Southern University
sm07795@georgiasouthern.edu

"A MULTICULTURAL CENTER'S ROLE IN BLACK MALE SUCCESS AT A PREDOMINANTLY WHITE INSTITUTION"

STEPHAN MOORE
DOCTORAL CANDIDATE
GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

**APPENDIX D****Participants Criteria Guidelines****Jack N. Averitt College of
Graduate Studies /College of Education**

Participants in this study should:

- Self-identify as Black
- Be U.S. citizens or U.S. Permanent Residents
- Be currently matriculating full-time students at the PWI who entered the institution with minimum admission requirements.
- Senior Standing
- If transferred, participants must have matriculated at the current institution for more than one (1) semester.
- Have accessed and used the services of the Multicultural Center at their PWI



APPENDIX E

Informed Consent for Focus Group Participants

**Jack N. Averitt College of
Graduate Studies /College of Education**

Department of Human Leadership, Technology, and Human Development

Informed Consent

Title: A Multicultural Center's Role In Black Male Success At A Predominantly White Institution

1. My name is Stephan T. Moore. I am a doctoral candidate at Georgia Southern University. I am undertaking this research in order to ascertain the ways in which multicultural centers contribute to the success of Black Male students at a predominantly white institution.
2. Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research is to show how academic and social programs and initiatives hosted by Multicultural Centers positively impact student satisfaction and engagement, including the ways in which their associated benefits affect the recruitment, retention, progression and graduation rates of Black males at predominantly white institutions. It is also the expectation that the findings of the study will propel the administration of various predominantly white institutions to implement additional programs to increase the likelihood of a successful outcome for Black male students.
3. Procedures to be followed: You will participate in a 10 question focus group discussion to be conducted by Mr. Moore. You will be asked questions concerning reason for selecting a PWI, the social challenges of being enrolled at a PWI, the academic challenges of being enrolled at a PWI, coping strategies used to deal with social challenges, coping strategies used to deal with academic challenges, particular services of the multicultural center that were accessed, the ways that the multicultural center helped you to overcome social challenges, the ways that the multicultural center helped you to overcome academic challenges and the role that the multicultural center played in helping you to reach your senior year. The focus group discussion will last no more than 90 minutes.
4. Discomforts and Risks: Risks to you are minimal, meaning they are not thought to be greater than other risks you experience every day.
5. Benefits:
 - a. There are no direct benefits to the participants.
 - b. This study will provide generable knowledge.
6. Duration/Time required from the participant: The focus group is expected to last no longer than 90 minutes.
7. Statement of Confidentiality: The focus group questions do not contain any information that could be linked to you. All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. The IRB, regulatory agencies or Dr. Sogren may review research records. There will be no video recording of the focus group. However, the focus group will be audio-recorded with your express permission and then stored in a locked filing

cabinet for 3 years following the conclusion of the study. Only the Principal Researcher and his Faculty Advisor will have access to the data during the study and in the 3 years after.

8. Future use of data. Deidentified or coded data from this study may be placed in a publically available repository for study validation and further research. You will not be identified by name in the data set or any reports using information obtained from this study, and your confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.”
9. Right to Ask Questions: Participants have the right to ask questions and have those questions answered. If you have questions about this study, please contact the researcher named above or the researcher’s faculty advisor, whose contact information is located at the end of the informed consent. For questions concerning your rights as a research participant, contact the Georgia Southern University Institutional Review Board at 912-478-5465.
10. Compensation: There are no costs to you or payments made for participating in this study.
11. Voluntary Participation: You do not have to participate in this research and may end your participation at any time by telling the person in charge, not returning the instrument. Furthermore, you do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to answer.
12. Penalty: There is no penalty for deciding not to participate in the study, and you may decide not to participate at any time, and you may withdraw without penalty or retribution.
13. You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to participate in this research study. If you consent to participate in this research study and to the terms above, please sign your name and indicate the date below

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records. This project has been reviewed and approved by the GSU Institutional Review Board under tracking number H19154.

Title of Project: A Multicultural Center’s Role In Black Male Success At A Predominantly White Institution

Principal Investigator: Stephan Moore, phone: (704) 747-996 email: sm07795@georgiasouthern.edu

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Carl Sogren, email: (912) 478-3108, email: csorgen@georgiasouthern.edu

Other Investigator(s): Not applicable

Participant Signature

Date

I, the undersigned, verify that the above-informed consent procedure has been followed.

Investigator Signature

Date



APPENDIX F

Informed Consent for Interview Participants

Informed Consent

Title: A Multicultural Center's Role In Black Male Success At A Predominantly White Institution

1. My name is Stephan T. Moore. I am a doctoral candidate at Georgia Southern University. I am undertaking this research in order to ascertain the ways in which multicultural centers contribute to the success of Black Male students a predominantly white institution.
2. Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research is to show how academic and social programs and initiatives hosted by Multicultural Centers positively impact student satisfaction and engagement, including the ways in which their associated benefits affect the recruitment, retention, progression and graduation rates of Black males at predominantly white institutions. It is also the expectation that the findings of the study will propel the administration of various predominantly white institutions to implement additional programs to increase the likelihood of a successful outcome for Black male students.
3. Procedures to be followed: You will participate in a 10 question interview to be conducted by Mr. Moore. You will be asked questions concerning reason for selecting a PWI, the social challenges of being enrolled at a PWI, the academic challenges of being enrolled at a PWI, coping strategies used to deal with social challenges, coping strategies used to deal with academic challenges, particular services of the multicultural center that were accessed, the ways that the multicultural center helped you to overcome social challenges, the ways that the multicultural center helped you to overcome academic challenges and the role that the multicultural center played in helping you to reach your senior year. The interview will last no more than 60 minutes.
4. Discomforts and Risks: Risks to you are minimal, meaning they are not thought to be greater than other risks you experience every day.
5. Benefits:
 - a. There are no direct benefits to the participants.
 - b. This study will provide generable knowledge.
6. Duration/Time required from the participant: The interview is expected to last no longer than 60 minutes.
7. Statement of Confidentiality: The interview questions do not contain any information that could be linked to you. All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. The IRB, regulatory agencies or Dr. Sogren may review research records. There will be no video recording of the interview. However, the interview will be audio-recorded with your express permission and then stored in a locked filing cabinet for 3 years following the conclusion of the study. Only the Principal Researcher and his Faculty Advisor will have access to the data during the study and in the 3 years after.
8. Future use of data. Deidentified or coded data from this study may be placed in a publically available repository for study validation and further research. You will not be identified by name in the data set or any reports using information obtained from this study, and your confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of

records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.”

9. **Right to Ask Questions:** Participants have the right to ask questions and have those questions answered. If you have questions about this study, please contact the researcher named above or the researcher’s faculty advisor, whose contact information is located at the end of the informed consent. For questions concerning your rights as a research participant, contact the Georgia Southern University Institutional Review Board at 912-478-5465.
10. **Compensation:** There are no costs to you or payments made for participating in this study.
11. **Voluntary Participation:** You do not have to participate in this research and may end your participation at any time by telling the person in charge, not returning the instrument. Furthermore, you do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to answer.
12. **Penalty:** There is no penalty for deciding not to participate in the study, and you may decide not to participate at any time, and you may withdraw without penalty or retribution.
13. **You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to participate in this research study.** If you consent to participate in this research study and to the terms above, please sign your name and indicate the date below

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records. This project has been reviewed and approved by the GSU Institutional Review Board under tracking number H19154.

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Other Investigator(s): Not applicable

Participant Signature

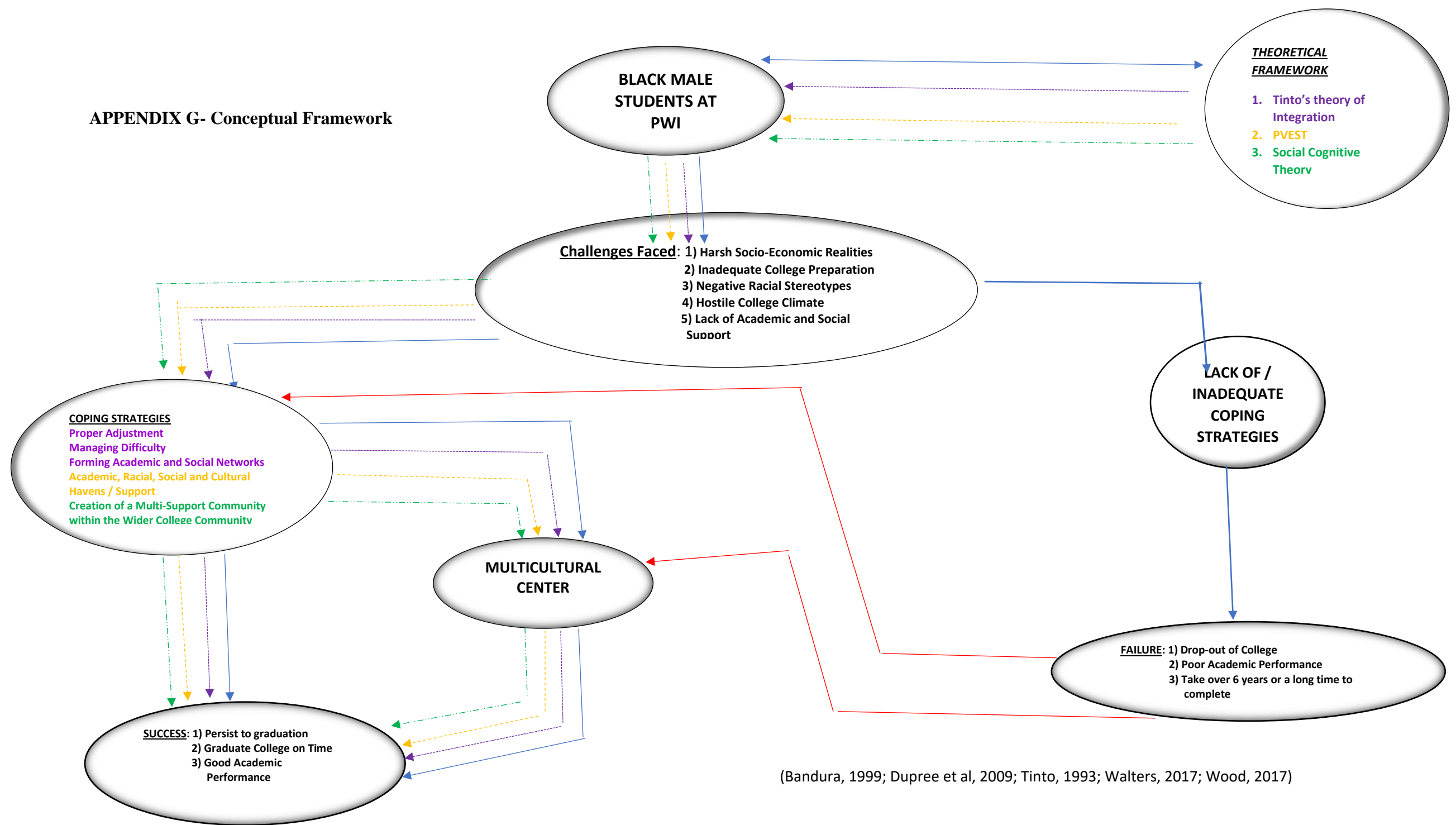
Date

I, the undersigned, verify that the above-informed consent procedure has been followed.

Investigator Signature

Date

APPENDIX G- Conceptual Framework



(Bandura, 1999; Dupree et al, 2009; Tinto, 1993; Walters, 2017; Wood, 2017)

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

APPENDIX H- Conceptual Framework after Findings

